

COMMUNICATION AS ONTOLOGY
FOR A STRUCTURATIONIST APPROACH TO ROLE ENACTMENT

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ABSTRACT

In recent years structuration theory has increased in popularity and acceptance among communication scholars. Despite significant critiques from other disciplines (e.g., business, education, sociology), only marginal attention has been given to criticisms of structuration in communication studies (cf. Conrad, 1993). Of key concern is that among the plethora of structuration literature in the communication discipline there is a prevailing absence of literature wherein communication is situated as the primary ontological basis. In response to criticisms of structuration theory, a communication-based model of transactional immediacy structures is presented. This model focuses on how individual agents use societal and organizational rules and resources as symbols to mutually create, recreate, give meaning to, and negotiate power relationships (*qua* structures) in an organizational context. Specifically, this study examines the creation, recreation, enactment, and legitimization of gender-role structures among members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS). The findings in this study point to the central role of communication in explaining structuration processes whereby individuals understand and perform gender roles. Furthermore, the data reveal that the constraining or enabling of action is more consequential to individual *perceptions* than other structural properties (i.e., rules). Communication is also shown to have a transformative role in shaping perceptions of agency and behaviors—and is thus an appropriate lens through which structuration processes in organizations can be analyzed.

DEDICATION

For all the years and all the patience, this dissertation is dedicated to Lorrie, Kaitlyn, and Jacob. A loving wife and beautiful children—what more can a man ask for?

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INTRODUCTION

Responses to criticisms of structuration theory—that it (a) describes unidirectional interactions rather than transactional processes (Conrad, 1993), (b) gives too much emphasis on agency (Archer, 1982, 1990), and (c) does not account sufficiently for time and structural constraints (Archer, 1982, 1990; Huspek, 1993)—are largely missing in the communication literature. These criticisms of structuration theory warrant responses from communication scholars. Elaborating upon these criticisms invites a response which extends the theory of structuration in ways that make it more appropriate for the study of organizational communication.

Moreover, situating an analysis in a voluntary (*qua* non-workplace) organization—whose members (a) are not required to join or participate in the organization's practices, (b) choose to join and participate (in some fashion) for reasons other than economic gain, (c) are capable of exiting the organization at will, and (d) presumably join for ideological, personal enrichment, or social reasons—is important because it is a context that illustrates the relevance of constraining power structures in cases where individuals have high degrees of agency. In other words, individuals join voluntary organizations for personal ideological reasons—not for economic gains. In the workplace, people may have less agency due to real or perceived conditions mandating their employment. However, we can presume that people choose freely to join organizations—such as community service organizations (e.g., Habitat for Humanity), cooperatives (e.g., local food co-ops), educational organizations (e.g., parent teacher associations), religious organizations (e.g., Promise

Keepers), student organizations (e.g., fraternities and sororities)—and that such choices are not laden with intent to resist organizational policies. And yet, people do resist. Hence, situating this analysis in a voluntary organization provides a context for explaining the relevance of competing power structures in all types of organizations—even in those organizations where face value may suggest otherwise.

An analysis of power structures relevant to roles in a voluntary organization can provide insights into resistance strategies—even of the most transparent nature (i.e., prevalence of resistance in cases where we would not expect to find it). One voluntary (*qua* non-workplace) organizational context where transparent (as well as obscure and blatant) resistance occurs is among members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS).

Because there are multiple ways individuals may enter the LDS church (e.g., descend from multiple generations of church members, join the church as children or teens, enter as adult converts), there may also be variable degrees of perceived ability to freely join or exit the church. Specifically, some may feel too tightly connected, due to family and social relationships, to ever leave the Mormon culture (i.e., they may exit the formal church organization but remain highly immersed in the culture of its members). Meanwhile other members may see church membership as an optional or less integral part of their lives, and thus perceive it to be more voluntary in nature. Thus, membership, participation, and continued involvement in the LDS church are not as straightforward as they may be in other organizations (e.g., workplace, civic, professional associations). For these reasons, the LDS church provides an appropriate

context for examining the complexities individuals experience in negotiating various organizational power structures.

Furthermore, the LDS church is an appropriate organizational context for this analysis because it is an organization in which gender is a highly visible (internally and externally) and contestable power structure. Specifically, role differentiation, according to church policy, is biologically driven—resulting in prescriptions of specific sex roles for church members.

In its highly visible prescriptions of sex roles, the LDS church uses the terms sex (*qua* biological distinction between male and female) and gender (*qua* social construction of masculine and feminine identities) interchangeably (e.g., *The Family: A Proclamation to the World*). However, in practice there is variance and complexity between sex and socially constructed gender roles (Beaman, 2001; Cornwall, 1994a). Hence, within the structurationist framework for this study, sex roles prescribed by the church function as one set of rules and resources in the creation of gender roles among church members. The individual's enactment of socially constructed gender roles may reinforce, resist, or challenge the church's biologically based sex roles. Because the term gender is used to refer to both sex and gender in this organization, the term *gender roles* will be used hereafter—thus ensuring that authentic voice is given to the participants.

The value of this analysis of how gender role structures are created among LDS church members is that it brings to light the agency of individual members of voluntary organizations and the possibility they have of creating and enacting

alternatives to existing (i.e., dominant) power structures. Thus, the focus of this study is on the *creation* of gender roles, not an examination of gender role or sex differences. Specifically, this study points to how organizational members can use rules and resources as symbols to negotiate, give meaning to, and legitimize their enactment of roles—despite how organizational structures may define such roles.

CHAPTER ONE: DILEMMAS FOR A STRUCTURATIONIST APPROACH TO ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

Structuration theory (Giddens, 1979, 1984) provides a useful framework for discussing how members of organizations draw upon rules and resources to create and enact alternative role structures. The following sections define structuration, discuss criticisms of structuration and the communication discipline's failure to provide responses to those criticisms, and propose a model synthesizing responses to criticisms and the aspects of structuration that are most salient for the study of organizational communication.

Structuration Theory

Structuration theory (Giddens, 1979, 1984) is a macro theoretical perspective (McPhee & Zaug, 2001), drawing upon an eclectic variety of theoretical traditions (see Turner, 1986; Witmer, 1997), which posits that our actions are governed by sets of rules, called structures. Specifically, Giddens (1979) defines structuration as “conditions governing the continuity or transformation of structures, and therefore the reproduction of systems” (p. 66). When we enact the rules and use the resources of said structures we create systems. Systems are sets of interdependent relationships among agents (*qua* individuals capable of purposeful and transformative action) whose interactions with one another manifest themselves as social entities, such as various types of societies (e.g., tribal, capitalist), governments, organizations, or groups. Borrowing from Wittgenstein, structuration posits that knowing how to go on

in a system is synonymous with drawing upon rules and resources of that system (*qua* structure) to guide our actions within the system—thereby reproducing the structure.

Detailed specification of how individuals produce and reproduce social structures and systems—in a manner consistent with the macro theoretical level, as introduced by Giddens (1979, 1984)—necessitates discussion of several components (*i.e., action/agency, actors/agents, dialectic of control, discursive consciousness, discursive penetration, duality of structure, potential for change, power, resources, rules, structures, systems, unintended consequences*) which are often precluded (or minimized) from simultaneous consideration in organizational communication literature. Presumably, these limitations are due to practical constraints (e.g., page limits, funding, availability of participants' time, complex and messy nature of too much data, or too many research questions).

Structuration in Communication

As a macro-theoretical approach, structuration does not lend itself to analyses of its entirety in the communication literature. Structuration in the communication literature is often reduced to reviews of rules, resources, structures, and systems (e.g., Garner, 2006; Lemus, Seibold, Flanagin, & Metzger, 2004; Lewis & Seibold, 1993; Meyers, Seibold, & Brashers, 1991; Sunwolf & Seibold, 1998). Fortunately, some organizational communication literature goes beyond these limitations to address components such as agency (McPhee, 2004; Witmer, 1997), discursive penetration (Howard & Geist, 1995), duality of structure (Browning & Beyer, 1998; Scott, Corman & Cheney, 1998; Witmer, 1997), modalities of structuration (Poole & Van

de Ven, 1989), situated activity (Scott, Corman & Cheney, 1998), time and space distancing (Bastien, McPhee, & Bolton, 1995; Scott, Corman & Cheney, 1998; Witmer, 1997), and unintended consequences (Butler & Modaff, 2008; Jian, 2007). However, the degree to which most organizational communication structurationist studies provide comprehensive treatments—which synthesize several of these components of structuration—is limited. Although, there are limitations to how exhaustive a particular study can be, some authors (e.g., Poole, Seibold, & McPhee, 1985; Sherblom, Keranen, & Withers, 2002) address the theory in a more comprehensive manner. More comprehensive treatments—which synthesize multiple aspects—of structuration can yield richer understandings of the complexities of individuals' experiences in social systems, and how they shape those systems (as the theory purports to explain).

Structuration theory is attractive to organizational communication scholars because it provides a vocabulary for illustrating a variety of communication phenomena that are salient across many types of organizational contexts. For example, components of structuration appear in organizational communication literature as theoretical frameworks for discussing identification (Scott, Corman, & Cheney, 1998), innovation processes (Dougherty, 2008; Lewis & Seibold, 1993), interorganizational relationships (Garner, 2006), network analysis (White, 1999), organizational change (Howard & Geist, 1995; Jian, 2007; Sherblom, Keranen, & Withers, 2002), organizational climate (Bastien, McPhee, & Bolton, 1995), organizational communication (Browning & Beyer, 1998; Yates & Orlikowski,

1992), organizational culture (Riley, 1983; Witmer, 1997), spiritual organizing (Goodier & Eisenberg, 2006), standard setting (Browning & Beyer, 1998), technology (Fulk, 1993), texts (McPhee, 2004), and work-family tensions (Butler & Modaff, 2008; Kirby & Krone, 2002).

Criticisms of Structuration

Structuration theory is not without its critics. In fact, Giddens' home discipline of sociology has given significant consideration to the strengths and weaknesses of structuration (see for example, Held & Thompson, 1989). However, in the communication discipline little effort has been exerted to critique or defend structuration. Furthermore, criticisms of structuration that have been widely acknowledged in other disciplines—such as education (New, 1994), information technology (Jones & Karsten, 2008), management (Barley & Tolbert, 1997; Willmott, 2000), and social ecology (Feldman, 2004)—have largely been overlooked in communication literature (see Conrad, 1993). It is as if communication scholars are quick to use structuration while abdicating responsibility for participating in debates about the theory's strengths and weaknesses (for an exception see Huspek, 1993). Specifically, organizational communication scholars should engage in the debate by responding to charges that structuration (a) describes unidirectional interactions rather than transactional processes (Conrad, 1993), (b) gives too much emphasis on agency (Archer, 1982, 1990), (c) does not account sufficiently for time and structural constraints (Archer, 1982, 1990; Huspek, 1993), (d) fails to provide a clear and consistent explication of rules (Thompson, 1984), (e) underemphasizes the relevance

of collective action (Conrad, 1993; Mouzelis, 1989), and (f) minimizes the role of human agency (King, 1998; Sewell, 1992).

Communication Responses to Critiques

Although structuration is widely used as a framework for explaining a variety of contexts (especially at group and organizational levels) and topics, communication scholars tend to overlook criticisms of structuration (see Conrad, 1993; Waldeck, Shepard, Teitelbaum, Farrar, & Seibold, 2002). Few have given serious consideration to criticisms of structuration. Equally sparse are efforts to analyze structuration in ways that extend or develop its theoretical premises. For example, such development of structuration theoretical premises in the communication literature pertains mostly to group communication (cf. Poole, 1999; Seibold & Meyers, 2007; Seyfarth, 2000, Waldeck, et al., 2002). In fact, the most prolific theoretical advancement of structuration from within the communication discipline—adaptive structuration theory (AST; DeSanctis & Poole, 1994; Poole & DeSanctis, 1990, 1992)—has been limited in its scope and its application primarily to uses of technology—particularly at the level of group decision making (e.g., Cho & Lee, 2008; Contractor & Seibold, 1993; Contractor, Seibold, & Heller, 1996; Lemus, Seibold, Flanagan, & Metzger, 2004; Sambamurthy, Poole, & Kelly, 1993; Scott, Quinn, Timmerman, & Garrett, 1998). More recently, Seibold and Meyers (2007) elaborate upon structuration's (i.e., not AST) pertinence to the group communication context by specifying a structurationist program of research on group argument (i.e., not limited to technology or group decision making). Missing are comparable efforts to develop

structuration for other group processes or at the organizational level. Thus, many structurationist organizational communication studies can be characterized as using the theory to advance context and topic ideas or to develop other theories with virtually no engagement in public scholarly dialogue regarding its implications and limitations (e.g, Bastien, McPhee, & Bolton, 1995; Browning & Beyer, 1998; Butler & Modaff, 2008; Dougherty, 2008; Fulk, 1993; Lewis & Seibold, 1993; Rose, 2006; Scott, Corman, & Cheney, 1998; Witmer, 1997). Specifically, although organizational communication scholars use structuration as an ontological basis for developing other theories and analyzing topics of interest, they have not responded to Conrad's (1993) plea for identification and implementation of ways that communication—as a transactional process—can be an ontology for structuration.

Five themes—interactional vs. transactional nature, duality vs. dualism, explication of rules, collective action, and derogation of agents—emerge in the literature on criticisms of structuration. Organizational communication scholars should be particularly interested in providing responses to these issues.

Interactional vs. Transactional Nature

One of the most scathing commentaries on structuration theory for organizational communication scholars—Conrad's (1993) reply to Banks and Riley's (1993) proposition that structuration be used as an ontology for communication—has gone virtually un-noticed in the communication literature. Conrad outlines various criticisms of structuration from other disciplines that should be addressed by communication studies implementing a structurationist approach. The detrimental

irony, however, is that Conrad goes beyond summarizing others' criticisms and fills a gap in the literature by providing a substantive communication-oriented argument which has had little bearing on how structuration is subsequently applied in communication research.

The central theme of Conrad's (1993) critique of structuration in the communication discipline is that, although we can gain something from using structuration as an ontology for communication (see Banks & Riley, 1993), we should use communication as an ontology for structuration. In other words, while the status quo has been that structuration subsumes communication—communication should subsume structuration. Richter (2000) concurs:

If anything, Conrad understates the case for communication researchers contributing to critique: There is not merely an opportunity, but a need for such commentary. Giddens' engagement with communication virtually spans our field. Surely we have something to say in reply? (p. 367)

Conrad further argues that structuration emphasizes processes of interaction whereas a communication approach would emphasize transactional processes. He asserts that symbolicity and meaning creation are central to a communication approach. Specifically, according to Conrad, structurationists should (a) conceptualize actors' knowledgeability as cocreated and managed in human transactions; (b) focus on how individuals may be influenced by specific interchanges more than "structural enablements/constraints that are not immediately present" (p. 202); and (c) look at how individuals "mutually attend to, interpret, are influenced by,

and respond to linguistic acts” (p. 203) rather than focusing on how individuals use rules as resources to influence one another.

Duality vs. Dualism

One of the most prevalent criticisms of structuration from disciplines other than communication is how relationships between action and structure are described. Specifically, Giddens posits that duality of structure best explains the relationship between action and structure. The duality of structure position views agency and structure as coterminous, different sides of the same coin, which simultaneously create and recreate one another, thereby functioning as medium and outcome of human interaction (Willmott, 2000). The duality of structure construct “logically entails a denial of pre-existence, entailing a vicious circularity for structure is ever the medium and the outcome, never a pre-existent given with which agency starts at time one and either elaborates upon or reproduces at time three” (Willmott, 2000, p. 103).

Contrasting structuration’s duality of structure, Giddens’ critics (e.g., Archer, 1982, 1990; Willmott, 2000) argue that dualism—as per the morphogenetic approach—is a more appropriate description of the relationship between action and structure. Morphogenesis may be unfamiliar to communication scholars but the basic principles of this approach explain why Archer and Willmott share a preference for dualism over duality.

Archer (1982) proposes morphogenesis as a preferred approach because it “is not only dualistic but sequential, dealing in endless cycles of--structural conditioning/social interaction/structural elaboration--thus unraveling the dialectic

interplay between structure and action” (p. 458). This perspective also explains that “during the time it takes to change something, that thing continues to exert a constraint which cannot be assumed to be insignificant in its social consequences, whilst it lasts” (p. 462). Thus, Archer’s answer to the structure-action dilemma is that structure and action operate over different time periods. Her position is based on two propositions: “that structure logically predates the action(s) which transform it,” and “that structural elaboration logically postdates those actions” (p. 468). In other words, according to Archer’s (1982) and Willmott’s (2000) conceptualizations of morphogenesis, there is a nonreciprocal temporal order in the relationship between structure and action.

Dualism sees structure and action as separate and competing concepts with a temporal order whereby one may influence the other (i.e., not change, create, or recreate). As Willmott (2000) proposes, structure and agency “are not coextensive” and they are “phased over different tracts of time” (p. 101).

Willmott’s (2000) morphogenetic explanation of organizational culture illustrates how conceptualizing agency and structure as a dualism can be beneficial for empirical analysis. In specifying his preference of morphogenesis over structuration, Willmott explains “morphogenetic processes are quintessentially sequential, dealing in endless three-part cycles of Structural Conditioning → Social Interaction → Structural Elaboration” (p. 98). Willmott draws much from Archer’s (1982, 1990) explanations of morphogenesis and her criticisms of Giddens.

Archer (1982, 1990) explains that Giddens' attempt to overcome the structure-agency dilemma with duality of structure, which is central to structuration, overemphasizes agency to the point that the relationship between agency and structure becomes unobservable. She argues that, rather than defining agency and structure as a duality, a theory that is well suited for empirical analysis should view agency and structure as a dualism whereby agency does not overshadow structure.

Hence, in an effort to re-establish the prominent role of structure, Archer (1982) proposes the morphogenetic approach. According to Archer structuration is “ever a process and never a product” (p. 457) conflating agency and structure.

The problem with the morphogenetic approach is that, by establishing structure as the basis for action, it overcompensates for the lack of emphasis on structure in alternative perspectives (King, 1999; Outhwaite, 1990). It does not acknowledge the role of action in creating structure—it only considers action as having a limited influence on structure. Nevertheless, morphogenesis can provide a vocabulary for (a) bringing structure and agency on a more equal level than described by structuration, (b) providing a model more conducive to empirical analysis, and (c) clarifying the role of structure from an organizational communication perspective.

Explication of Rules

Thompson (1984) criticizes Giddens' conceptualization of structure because the types (nature) of rules remain underspecified. “While rules of various kinds are important features of social life, the study of rules (and resources) is not identical to, but rather distinct from and on a different level than analysis of social structure” (p.

158). He argues that we should demonstrate how “rules are differentiated according to class, sex, region, and so on” (p. 159). Thompson also suggests that

the issue is not so much whether the restrictions are intended or unintended consequences which may become the conditions of further action. Rather, what is at issue is the fact that the restrictions on opportunities operate differentially, affecting unevenly various groups of individuals whose categorization depends on certain assumptions about social structure; and it is this differential operation or effect which cannot be grasped by the analyses of rules alone. (p. 159)

Thompson’s (1984) criticism and accompanying call for considering how rules function differentially point to the importance of assessing the discursive penetration of individual agents. Structuration treatment of discursive penetration in the communication literature has received only marginal (e.g., Howard & Geist, 1995) attention. However, for purposes of analyses—especially of organizational communication—we should consider various discoverable characteristics of individual agents, of which rules differentiation (i.e., the types of rules drawn upon in the creation and maintenance of systems and structures) is one. Additionally, Thompson explains that we should explicate the relationship between a particular set of rules and the structure or system of interest. Specifically, he argues that grammar rules of the English language likely have little bearing on Great Britain’s social issues. For example, the grammar rules that allow conversations among strangers in an airport are not likely to change national health care policies. The same grammar

rules governing conversations among strangers may, however, change rules governing seating arrangements among passengers—as manifested by two business executives who upon discovering a mutual acquaintance decide to take advantage of vacant seats and sit next to each other, and continue their network-building conversation, on the flight. Hence, organizational communication scholars should specify differentiation of rules that are relevant to the level of analyses studied.

Individual agents have a variety of sources (*qua* systems as resources) from which to draw rules. To facilitate explanation of rules differentiation we should consider five levels of interactions—societal, organizational, extra organizational, familial, and interpersonal—which provide individual agents the necessary means for creating their own rules (*qua* alternative role structures) whereby agents justify potentially alternative enactments.

For example, a public school teacher struggling with national “no child left behind” policies may draw upon each of the levels mentioned above to create his or her own rationale (*qua* rules) for specific enactments on the job as well as enactments as a community member. Societal rules may suggest: (a) teachers are not paid enough therefore no one would blame a teacher for not implementing policies, (b) this is a national policy not up for debate by individual teachers, and (c) it is the teacher’s job to help our children succeed. Organizational rules would add: (a) we need the funding so job evaluations will hinge on how well performance is congruent with national policy, (b) teachers are paid to do what the school board says, and (c) off the record, we do not like it either but we have to comply in order to survive. However, extra-

organizational rules may respond: (a) private schools seem to be doing fine and they are not held accountable by this policy, (b) school district X does something else instead, and (c) NEA reports that this is a faulty policy. Meanwhile, familial and interpersonal rules explain: (a) you are a wonderful teacher who does not need the federal government to tell you what to do in the classroom, (b) we raised you to be obedient and honest in all your dealings, this includes being honest and obedient in your workplace, and (c) despite what the administration says let me tell you how I get around all this bureaucracy. The teacher in our example must decide how he or she will perform (*qua* enact) the role of teacher relevant to *no child left behind*. The options range from simple compliance to resignation from the district. It seems more likely that the teacher will choose an alternative somewhere in the middle of these extreme options. Perhaps the teacher will accept the colleague's suggestion of how to get around the policy—justifying the decision with rules from a variety of sources (e.g., teachers are not paid enough therefore no one would blame a teacher for not implementing policies, NEA reports that this is a faulty policy, you are a wonderful teacher who does not need the federal government to tell you what to do in the classroom). Regardless of the ultimate enactment, this teacher is likely to draw upon multiple resources—societal, organizational, extra organizational, familial, and interpersonal—to create his or her own rules. Meanwhile, the creation of individual rules, and the meaning this teacher gives to his or her ultimate enactment of those rules will (a) become shaped by the relevant significance placed by the individual on each of the various levels (i.e., societal, organizational, extra organizational, familial,

and interpersonal); and (b) contribute to the subsequent perception of relevant significance placed on these levels.

Collective Action

Similar to Archer's argument that structuration de-emphasizes structure and Thompson's argument that Giddens underspecifies rules, Mouzelis (1989) explains that a side-effect of underemphasizing structure is that it prevents consideration of collective action. Understanding the role of collective action is important because such action reflects and creates "variable degrees of freedom and constraint for individual actors" (p. 630). As Conrad (1993) explains, Giddens' focus on individual agency "makes it difficult . . . to incorporate collectives (for example, organizations-as-actors) as social agents into the theory of structuration" (p. 200). Although we conceptualize collectives, such as organizations, as originating from symbolic interaction, they can function as agents. As Poole and Van de Ven (1989) state, "individual actors create and maintain structures, but an organization is a powerful social institution with a life of its own" (p. 568). Thus, while collectives are not agents, organizational communication scholars should adopt conceptualizations of structuration that allow for identifying ways that collectives function (appear) as agents.

Derogation of Agents

Contrasting Archer's claim that Giddens privileges agency too much is the argument that structure is too pervasive in structuration theory (King, 1998; Sewell, 1992). King, however, overstates the derogation of agents in Giddens'

conceptualization of structural constraints. Essentially, King argues that we do not need to explain how agents are situated in, enabled by, or constrained by structure “but only how they interact with one another” (p. 382). The problem with this position is that it suggests that interaction is devoid of context (which necessarily implies structure) and thereby fails to account for outcomes of interaction (e.g., structures) or subsequent context (e.g., structures) in which interactions occur.

Sewell (1992), on the other hand, tries to elevate the status of agents without removing structure from the analysis. Similar to Huspek (1993) and Thompson (1984), Sewell argues that we should consider how multiple structures intersect. Central to Sewell’s conceptualization of multiple structures intersecting (and overlapping) is the notion that resources (human and non-human) are (a) effects of structure (b) polysemic, (c) unevenly distributed, and (d) controllable by agents. “Indeed, part of what it means to conceive of human beings as agents is to conceive of them as empowered by access to resources of one kind or another” (p. 10). Hence, similar to rules, agents have varying access to resources. Resources have a number of origins identical to the types of rules discussed above: (a) societal, (b) organizational, (c) extra organizational, (d) familial, and (e) interpersonal. A communicative approach to structuration would view resources as symbols that have or create meaning and rules as the conditions governing access and use of resources. A server’s access to restaurant resources and how he or she uses those resources to satisfy or disappoint customers illustrates this argument. When a customer has a complaint and the server goes beyond correcting the problem and offers to compensate the customer

for the meal or provides a free dessert or drink, the access and use of resources become symbolic of concern and appreciation for the customer. However, when organizational rules limit access to these resources to the shift manager—who may be unavailable or unwilling to compensate for a meal or provide a free beverage—the resulting symbolism attached to the use of resources could be opposite of the symbols in the previous case (i.e., profit is valued more than customer satisfaction). Thus, the variability of access (determined by rules) to, and use of resources, can result in differing symbols.

Summary of Structuration Dilemmas for Communication Studies

Structuration theory has been widely debated outside of communication studies but little attention has been paid to these debates in the communication literature. Of particular interest for organizational communication scholars are issues such as interaction vs. transaction, duality of structure vs. dualism, explication of rules, collective action, and derogation of lay actors. Communication oriented discussion of these issues can suggest some potentially beneficial conceptualizations for structurationist studies of organizational communication. For example, (a) the interaction-transaction debate results in a focus on the use and meaning given to symbols (i.e., rules and resources); (b) the duality of structure vs. dualism dilemma introduces the possibility of a vocabulary (e.g., morphogenetic) for further equalizing agency and structure in a structurationist approach; (c) the call for an explication of rules germinates a rules typology specifying various sources and types of rules; (d) the argument that structuration does not account for collective action suggests the

relevance of identifying how organizations function as agents (though we understand them to be social collectives created by agents and not actually agents themselves); and (e) charges regarding the derogation of lay actors invite consideration of how resources are unevenly distributed across multiple structures.

Transactional Immediacy Structures

In response to the lack of attention given in the organizational communication literature to viable criticisms of structuration theory, a model of transactional immediacy structures is proposed. This model is an attempt to synthesize three objectives: (a) respond to criticisms of structuration, (b) build upon components of structuration that have been shown to be of particular relevance to organizational communication, and (c) explain what a transactional perspective of communication can add to a structurationist approach—culminating in a set of propositions suitable for empirical analysis. In the following sections, core assumptions and key components of the model of transactional immediacy structures are discussed.

Core Assumptions

Criticisms and defenses of structuration are grounded in efforts to resolve a number of seemingly contradictory theoretical propositions. The model of transactional immediacy structures builds on an integrative approach (i.e., conceptualizing issues as tensions to be dealt with rather than as opposites) to these propositions. Specifically, transactional immediacy structures can best be understood if we first consider five topics of concern in the development and critique of structurationist approaches: (a) a typology of structures, (b) temporal considerations,

(c) determinism vs. voluntarism, (d) duality of structure vs. dualism, and (e) communication as ontology.

Typology of Structures

When Giddens and his critics mention structures, they are generally referencing larger societal issues. Rarely do communication scholars working from a structurationist approach address structures at this level. However, if structuration theory is adaptable and applicable to the organizational or group context then its criticisms—however macro in nature—should be understood as being equally important and applicable in organizational and group contexts. One may argue that criticisms of structuration are not relevant to organizational communication because their conceptualization is at a higher level than that which communication scholars conceive. This is a faulty position because such thinking fosters application of structuration without an understanding of the implications of premises from which it originates. Hence, it is important to understand that the structures that Giddens mentions differ from the types of structures addressed in organizational communication. This distinction does not, however, allow for a dismissal of criticisms of structuration as it pertains to macro societal structures. Rather, criticisms addressing the macro issues (*qua* societal structures) pertain equally to as many levels along the micro-macro continuum as structuration is applied.

It is appropriate that structurationist approaches be applied to several levels of structures in the communication literature. As Lewis and Seibold (1993) argue, “although any observable system may be of interest, it is the analysis of structure that

is central to understanding how and why systems appear as they do” (p. 236).

Furthermore, Burkhalter, Gastil, and Kelshaw (2002) help us see that there are various levels of structures.

When viewed from the structurational perspective, a society is nothing more than a massive cluster of structures that have persisted for a long period of time and over a sufficiently large span of space. Within societies, there are many subsystems in which structures have become integrated into smaller clusters. (p. 412)

Taken together, these positions suggest that it is appropriate, and of great importance, for communication scholars to point to and describe multiple levels of structures.

However, acknowledging the significance of multiple levels existing has largely failed to result in specifying what is meant by multiple levels of structures in terms that are empirically meaningful for organizational communication scholars.

Huspek’s (1993) theory of dueling structures—which he proposes in his analysis, from a macro-philosophical approach, of linguistic structures at the level of social class relations—is one effort to identify the functions of multiple levels of structure. Huspek argues that structuration focuses on the enabling function of structures to a degree that precludes adequate consideration of how structures are limiting (see also Sewell, 1992). Huspek argues that this shortcoming is easily addressed by conceptualizing multiple structures that operate at different levels. For example, in terms of macro linguistic structures, he posits “any single language must be seen as having multiple structures” (p. 14). Specifically, Huspek suggests two

levels of structures: *langue* (i.e., linguistic structure; what governs) and *parole* (i.e., practical activities of speech; what is enacted). Huspek says that Giddens privileges *parole* over *langue* but that we should understand the two as competing structures that influence one another.

Huspek's (1993) notion of dueling structures moves us in a direction toward better understanding the constraining nature of structures while attempting to safeguard the significance of agency. Huspek's theory is limited in its capacity to provide an understanding of multiple structures relevant to organizational communication because it does not answer two important questions. First, who creates these multiple structures? Leaving this question unanswered would imply that multiple structures originate from a mysterious "they" (anonymous subjects) whereas a model of transactional immediacy structures proposes that it is a collective "we" (purposeful agents) that creates multiple structures. The second question left unanswered by Huspek is: What are the various levels of structures and how do they relate to one another? The existence of multiple structures implies (a) that there is some relationship among these structures, (b) that knowing how they connect with each other could broaden our understanding of each, and (c) that the nature of action (i.e., purposes, limitations, available resources) differs across structural levels. Unfortunately, Huspek's description of dueling structures, which correlate with social classes, does not provide an explicit vocabulary for describing and explaining the role of multiple structures in communication phenomena beyond macro linguistic structures at the level of social class relations. Furthermore, this conceptualization

does little to facilitate empirical discussions of how multiple structures operate in organizations. For the purposes of organizational communication research concerning how individuals negotiate day-to-day organizational power relations (as opposed to social issues largely beyond their control) we need a better specification of the types of structures, which could account for various structures' abilities to influence, and be influenced by, individual agents as well as how they converge upon any given power relationship at specified point(s) in time and place.

Hence, a typology of structures would help us define precisely which structure, and at what level, it is that we are talking about and what the degree of discursive penetration (of a given agent) is likely to be. There are seven types of structures: (a) societal, (b) inter-organizational, (c) organizational, (d) group, (e) familial, (f) interpersonal, and (g) immediate (*qua* immediacy structures; see Table 1). These structure types account for a variety of overlapping positions (i.e., concentric circles) across the micro-macro spectrum. Explicating the nature of, and relationships among, these structure types can assist in specifying precisely which structures communication scholars reference in their analyses—without obfuscating or confounding the role(s) other structures play.

Table 1

Typology of Structures

<i>Societal Structures</i>	Macro collective sets of lower level structures manifested as language and grammar rules, economic systems, government types, and cultures.
<i>Inter-Organizational Structures</i>	Structures that govern how individuals representing differing organizations interact with one another.
<i>Organizational Structures</i>	Structures that govern interactions and activities within a given organization.
<i>Group, Familial, and Interpersonal Structures</i>	Lower level structures that draw upon higher level structures to provide context and rules for most action among individual agents.
<i>Immediacy Structures</i>	An outcome of transactional symbolicity which functions as (a) a manifestation of an individual agent's set of experiences, perceptions and interpretations, of how multiple structure types intersect; and (b) a set of rules governing actions in subsequent experiences and intersections of multiple structure types.

Societal structures are at the highest end of the micro-macro continuum and exist as manifestations of collective sets of lower level structures. Societal structures are manifested as language and grammar rules, economic systems, government types, and cultures (*qua* ethnic and national systems; not as in organizational culture). All other levels of structures (i.e., inter-organizational, organizational, group, familial, interpersonal, immediate) are (a) necessary components of societal structures; (b) dependent upon societal rules and resources; and (c) embedded in these larger societal structures.

Inter-organizational structures are those structures (*qua* rules) which govern how individuals representing differing organizations interact with one another in unique relationships (*qua* systems). These relationships (formal and informal) are manifested in a number of ways such as regulations (e.g., trade and labor laws), multiple organizations with competing interests intersecting (e.g., religion and politics in the workplace, work-family issues), multiple organizations with similar interests intersecting (e.g., trade shows, coalitions), and agents collaborating to accomplish individual needs across a variety of organizations (e.g., professional associations, unions).

Organizational structures are the rules that govern interactions and activities within a given organization. Each organization has its own set of rules, written, spoken, un-written and unspoken. Organizations (especially large organizations) are generally meso-level structures embedded in societal structures and connected with other organizations via various inter-organizational structures. For the purposes of

this paper organizations are conceptualized as systems that are generated by collective sets of interdependent relationships among individual agents. Interactions within these systems are governed by structures comprised of various rules. Organizations are created by transactional processes among individual agents but have the appearance of having always existed, thereby functionally play a role as agents (hence, the importance of accounting for collectivities as agents). It is easy in communication literature to recognize organizations as agents and let the emphasis on individuals fall by the wayside. However, although organizations function as pseudo agents, it is important to remember that organizations (as all other structures) originate in human symbolic transactions, and a structurationist approach is concerned with how individuals (not organizations) use rules and resources. Hence, the appropriate level of analysis for structurationist studies, as Giddens (1979) argues, is the individual agent in the context and with the understanding of the influences from larger societal and organizational structures. The function of individuals in organizational structures could well be best understood in terms of their actions in lower level structures (i.e., group, familial, interpersonal, and immediacy).

Group, familial, and interpersonal (i.e., dyadic) structures—while situated in the context of organizational, inter-organizational, and societal structures—are comprised of rules specific to each context. These lower level structures draw upon higher level structures (organizational, inter-organizational, and societal structures) to provide context for most action among individual agents. Similarly, rules that govern action among agents in these lower level structures may contribute to the nature of

rules in higher level structures. An interpersonal structure provides rules for behavior in the context of a specific dyad which may be situated in the context of an organization. Such interpersonal structures may provide resources for other interpersonal relationships, but each interpersonal structure must constitute its own set of rules. For example, the structure for an interpersonal relationship with an officemate is likely to be much different than a structure for an interpersonal relationship with a supervisor. Meanwhile, agents are simultaneously members of both higher level and lower level structures whether or not a lower level structure is formally designated part of a higher level organization. For example, a working mother is a member of interpersonal, familial, organizational, and societal structures.

Immediacy structures are created by transactional symbolicity. Therefore, an immediacy structure is a manifestation of an individual agent's set of experiences relative to perceptions and interpretations of multiple overlapping structural types (e.g., work-family issues). An immediacy system is manifested by interactions among agents who share similar or compatible immediacy structures (e.g., in groups).

Immediacy structures occur at the micro level but only in the context of macro issues which influence those transactions that create immediacy. Immediacy structures are limited by, but can transcend and are not necessarily controlled by, macro structures. Also, immediacy structures can have influence but may not necessarily cause observable change in the macro structures. Efforts to create and recreate immediacy structures by drawing upon the rules and resources of organizational and societal structures may have the unintended consequences of either causing some change (i.e.,

structural elaboration) at any structural level(s) or reinforcing the preexisting conditions of these structures. Structural elaboration is most likely to result from consistent changes across multiple immediacy structures (e.g., grassroots movements).

Temporal Considerations

Structuration theory is particularly interesting and methodologically frustrating due to its consideration of how time pertains to agency, structure, and outcomes (*qua* new systems and structures). Specifically, the communication literature on structuration is inundated with references to the simultaneous production and reproduction of systems and structures. Although we can see some simultaneity in these processes, we should be careful to not overlook ways in which agency and structure operate in a chronological (i.e., non-simultaneous) fashion. This point has received minor attention in communication literature. For example, White (1999) explains:

Although Giddens (1979) describes structuration as a reciprocal process, in which structures of various kinds shape and in turn are modified by the actions of individuals, it is necessary, as Archer (1988) makes clear, to distinguish analytically between the two processes. It is possible to assign structure a causal role without assigning it temporal precedence to all action, just as the reverse is possible. At any one point in time, the product of prior action is the structure in which actors are immersed, and it is that structure that we expect to influence subsequent activity. (p. 608)

Arguing whether or not structures exist outside of interaction is similar to asking if a tree makes a sound when it falls despite the absence of human ears to hear the fall. Consider, for example, a purchasing manager who participates in organizational and industry structures. These structures constrain and enable the purchaser's activity while on the job. However, when the manager goes home for the weekend, certain properties of the structures remain in motion despite the fact that he or she is not present as an agent in the structure. The residual constraints of the structure will continue to affect the purchaser's job functions and influence his or her activity upon return—as well as the job functions and activities of other agents (e.g., personnel, customers). Meanwhile, the purchaser's (as an agent in the structure) actions prior to leaving the office for the weekend may have residual effects on the structure and activities of other agents while he or she is absent (e.g., if the purchaser failed to order a particular wire then the sales representative will not be able fulfill a customer's request for that wire). Furthermore, the residual effects of structures and agency remain in force in parallel cases (e.g., store managers, warehouse staff, etc.). Hence, the structure continues to exist beyond the contemporaneous interdependent activity of agents. This is not to say that structures exist without interaction and agency—structures come into existence only as a result of interaction—but they do continue to exist in the absence of direct interaction among agents.

Using Archer's (1982) model of morphogenetic processes as a foundation, Figure 1 illustrates temporal relationships between agency and structure as well as how immediacy structures are situated temporally. Three periods of time—historical,

present, future—are depicted in this model. First, in the historical time period, we conceptualize a structure—created by interactions among agents—into which a particular agent has entered.

The second time period is the present where the simultaneous creation, enactment, and recreation of immediacy structures and immediacy systems occur. The agent who is capable (i.e., has agency) of enacting his or her immediacy structure and participates in immediacy systems does so in the here and now within the context of larger structures (e.g., organizational, societal) which are bound by historical precedence and laden with implications of a continued existence into the future.

The third time period depicted is the future. Structures and systems continue to exist beyond the actions of agents in the present. Enactments of immediacy structures may have some bearing on structural elaboration but are not likely to change the essence of a structure (*qua* organization, society). Hence, although there is the possibility of some change, the future state of a structure is likely to carry with it residual effects and sedimentation.

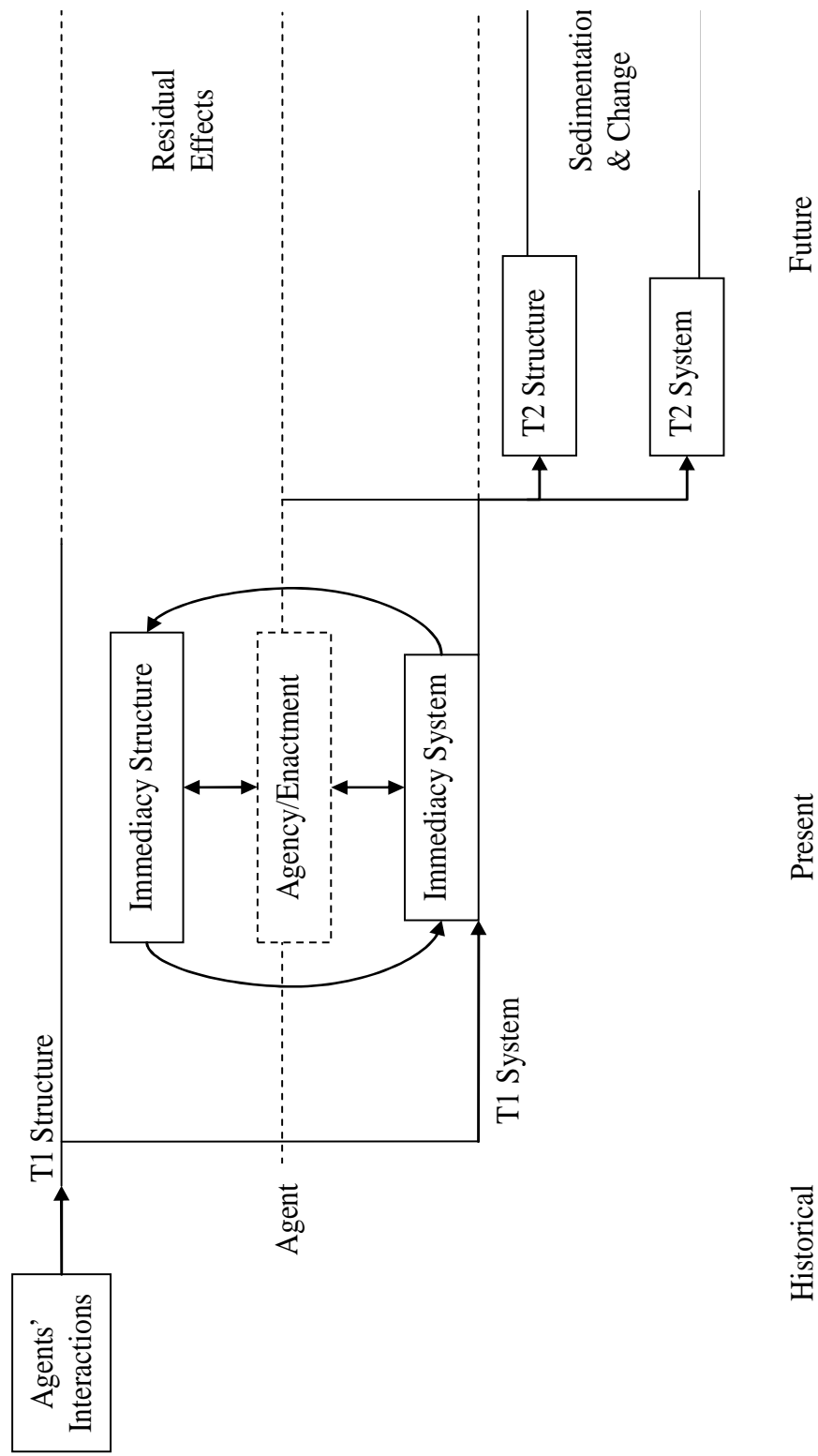
Residual effects include memories of structural characteristics prior to elaboration or change which continue to have a bearing on subsequent immediacy structures. For example, departmental policies or events that were in place thirty years ago may have been removed or amended. Nevertheless, some individuals' memories of previous policies or activities may continue to shape their perceptions (i.e., immediacy structures) of what activity is acceptable or what additional policy changes are plausible. There are also residual effects relevant to one's agency,

whether or not change has occurred. For example, an organization that establishes a no tolerance sexual harassment policy does not necessarily change how individuals perceive, or act in, the organizational culture. The memory (*qua* residual effect) of tolerance may facilitate opportunities for a supervisor to continue legitimizing his or her behavior. Meanwhile, residual effects may cause a target of sexual harassment to continue fearing inappropriate behavior despite policy changes. Although agency may lead to structural elaboration or change the residual effects continue to play a significant role in how individuals create and enact immediacy structures.

Of similar importance is sedimentation. Sedimentation is different than residual effects because residual effects refer to memories and perceptions of how the structure used to be while sedimentation refers to properties of the structure which have not changed. Sedimentation is obvious in the case of sexual harassment policy changes. Specifically, *no tolerance* policies do not remove (hence, sedimentation) power relations laden with position authority that function to maintain environments (*qua* structures) wherein victims (whose immediacy structures may be shaped by residual effects) are hesitant to file complaints.

Immediacy structures, therefore, are structures that individual actors carry with themselves and as such continue to be created and shaped (i.e., recreated) as they experience structural constraints. At this level is where we truly find the simultaneous production and reproduction of which the structuration literature continuously speaks.

Figure 1: Locating Immediacy Structures



Temporal distinctions become less apparent at the level of immediacy structures, and production and reproduction of structures and systems have the appearance of being simultaneous more so than at other (e.g., organizational, societal) levels. In organizational structures agents are not always present, but the structure is. In societal structures agents are always present but most often appear absent because their level of discursive penetration is generally so limited that consequences of individual agency are minimal to the point that there is generally no observable affect (unless considered as a collectivity—which structuration fails to consider adequately). In immediacy structures individual agents are always present; however, interaction with other agents is often suspended.

Determinism vs. Voluntarism

In an effort to resolve the determinism-voluntarism debate Giddens (1979, 1984) reconstitutes the relationship between agency and structure as a duality wherein the two are interpenetrated (Clegg, 1989). In response to this fusion, other social theorists (Archer, 1982; King, 1998; Mouzelis, 1989; Sewell, 1992) accuse Giddens of conflating the two opposing ideas. This continues to be an issue for organizational communication scholars wishing to conduct empirical analyses of power relationships from a structurationist perspective. If we are to provide a contextualized understanding of the communication processes that constitute power relationships in organizations—that can result in guiding principles capable of helping dominated individuals improve their organizational experiences—then we should conceptualize agency and structure in ways that highlight the voluntaristic aspects of power

relationships without obfuscating the deterministic properties of life in social systems—and vice versa. Hence, agency and structure are not viewed as synonymous and contemporaneous. Instead, agency and structure are conceptualized as separate—yet highly interdependent and mutually influential—components of equal magnitude in power relationships. The agency/structure relationship thereby functions as a process whereby individuals exert control (*qua* resistance) in systems (*qua* organizations) and organizations (*qua* structures) act back upon (i.e., constrain and enable) individual agents resulting in mutually residual effects (with the possibility of immediate consequences).

Duality of Structure vs. Dualism

The dualism and duality of structure approaches—by which morphogenesis and structuration attempt to explain the relationship between structure and agency—are generally conceptualized as opposing one another (see Bagguley, 2003; Mouzelis, 1989; Willmott, 2000). Dualism suggests that structure and agency are separate concepts within an unbalanced relationship wherein structure has more control over agency; agency has limited potential to cause change, and whatever change may result from an individual's action is delayed and has minimal consequence. Duality of structure, on the other hand, suggests that structure and agency are contemporary in their existence, equally and mutually influential, inseparable from one another, and synonymous in practice (although bracketed separately for purposes of theoretical discussion). In other words, structures do not exist without agency and the very act of agency necessarily results in simultaneous creation and recreation of structure.

Conceptualizing dualism and duality of structure as opposites results in a truncated explanation of structural changes which could be extended by adopting an integrated approach to structure and agency (Bagguley, 2003; Mouzelis, 1989). In fact, as Mouzelis posits, dualism and duality of structure are both indispensable. Hence, combining morphogenetic dualism and structurationist duality of structure in the model of transactional immediacy structures should not be viewed as a contradiction but as a tension wherein each approach can provide insights not visible by the other.

The micro-macro dilemma illustrates how conceptualizing dualism and duality of structure as mutually indispensable anchors of a productive tension, rather than mutually exclusive opposing ideas, can be beneficial. The micro-macro distinction generally suggests that agency exists only at the micro level and structural constraints prevail at the macro level (see Mouzelis, 1989). When duality of structure and dualism are seen as opposing ideas, we are limited in our understanding of structure at the micro level and agency at the macro level. Specifically, emphasis on dualism minimizes the influence of agency on macro-level processes while overemphasizing the role of structure in micro-level action. Similarly, a focus on duality of structure minimizes the influence of structure in macro-level processes while overemphasizing the role of agency in micro-level action. An approach which integrates dualism and duality of structure broadens the scope of what we are able to understand about the roles of agency and structure at both micro and macro levels. We should see agency at the micro level and structural constraint at the macro level

as ends of a pendulum. *Micro* = *more agency* (but not the absence of structural constraint). *Macro* = *more structural constraint* (but not the absence of agency).

The degree to which duality of structure (emphasis on agency) eclipses dualism (emphasis on structural constraint), at either the micro- or macro-level, depends upon (a) how grand or specific the specified structure is, (b) the agent's level of discursive penetration, (c) context and nature of the structure, and (d) duplicity of co-created meaning (i.e., how many other sets of interdependently connected agents create similar meaning). For example, a graduate student who chooses to change the composition of his or her committee has a limited level of discursive penetration. He or she may initiate radical changes in the nature of the committee but has little or no capacity to change the function of the committee or the structure of the department and university. Thus, the student's ability to shape his or her agency at the micro level experience (i.e., nature of the committee) does not change the macro structure (i.e., department or university). The macro structure continues to define the parameters of the student's ability to enact change (i.e., discursive penetration). Meanwhile, others—such as a professor who refuses to serve (or fails to function effectively) on certain committees, or a department chair who changes policies in ways that control who can be on which committees—may: (a) act on various department and university level structures (i.e., how grand the structure is); (b) have greater levels of discursive penetration than the student; (c) create an environment of frustration (i.e., nature of the structure); and (d) contribute to negative perceptions of other faculty and students (i.e., duplicity of co-created meaning). Hence, the ineffective committee member or

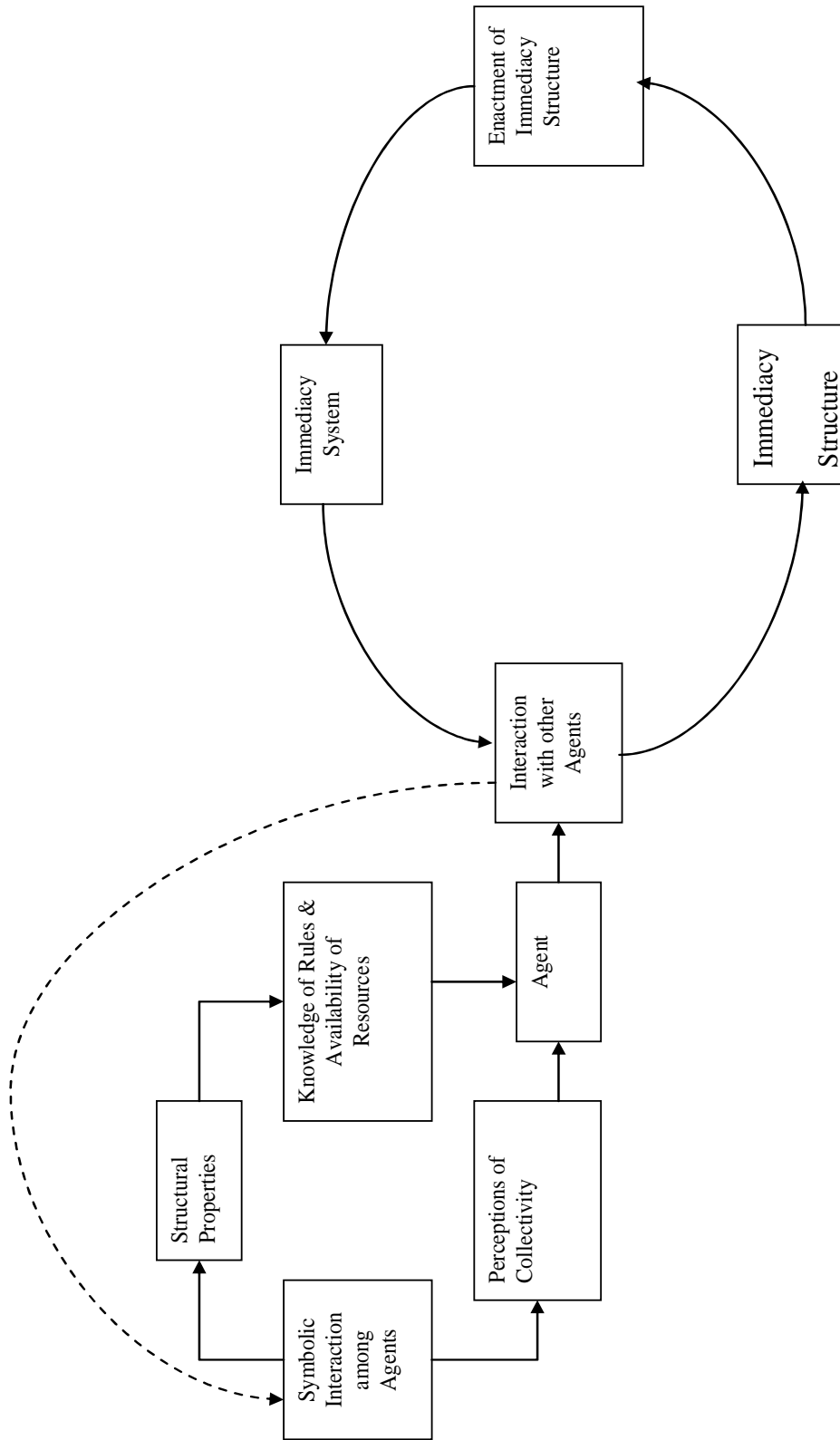
controlling department chair is capable of changing the structure in ways that eclipse the agency of an individual student.

Communication as Ontology

King (1998) complains that structuration looks at interactions between individuals and structures while what we should examine are interactions among individuals. This position needs to be reconciled with Conrad (1993) and Mouzelis' (1989) argument that the relevance of collective action should be considered. Using communication as an ontology for structuration (as per Conrad, 1993) mandates a focus on transactional processes, between individuals, embedded in a context of structures (*qua* organizations) which, as Poole and Van de Ven (1989) argue, are not agents but take on some properties of agents. The pseudo agent characteristic of organizations is manifested in various messages (e.g., contracts, mission statements, policies) and symbols (e.g., corporate logos, uniforms or acceptable attire, salary variance) which although created and controlled by specific agents (historical or present; e.g., executives, board members, legislators, employees) have the appearance (particularly as perceived by lay agents at lower hierarchical levels) of having been germinated by the organization (i.e., the pervasive anonymous "they"). Therefore, a theoretical analysis of immediacy structures which utilizes an ontological approach grounded in communication would acknowledge the effect of collectivities as pseudo agents but maintain an anchored focus on symbolic exchanges between individual actors engaged in giving meaning to structures that enable and constrain their enactment of various rules.

While situating communication as an ontology for structuration requires using the individual as the unit of analysis and conceptualizing collectivities as pseudo agents, there are additional criteria that are necessary to satisfy in a response to Conrad's (1993) plea for a transactional approach. Specifically, Conrad argues that a communication approach to structuration would: (a) view symbolicity and meaning creation as central; (b) emphasize that actors' knowledgeability is cocreated and managed in human transactions; (c) focus on how people may be influenced by particular interchanges more than structural enablements and constraints; (d) move away from looking at how individuals use rules and resources to influence one another and address how individual agents "mutually attend to, interpret, are influenced by, and respond to linguistic acts" (p. 203); and (e) consider how rules and resources "are perceived as relevant/available in a particular transaction" (p. 203). Drawing upon these propositions a theoretical model of transactional immediacy structures (see Figure 2) illustrates what a communication approach to structurationist processes would look like.

Figure 2: Proposed Theoretical Model



Key Components of the Model of Transactional Immediacy Structures

This model is grounded in the assumption that all structures result from symbolic interaction (*qua* the use of symbols in exchanges that result in meaning creation) among individuals (*qua* agents capable of purposive and transformative action). One outcome of symbolic interaction among individuals is the meaning those individuals give to a structure and its properties. Structural properties include contracts, by-laws, positions, formal hierarchies, and other forms of normalized rules that govern actions within the structure. Even when individuals exert the best efforts to be democratic in the creation of structures (*qua* organizations) there are always structural properties that limit agency to some degree (cf. Cheney, 1999; Rothschild & Whitt, 1986). Through the creation and implementation of structural properties, individuals define (i.e., co-create meaning) the variability in who has knowledge of which rules and who has access to which resources.

Another outcome of symbolic interaction among individuals is the perceptions that agents have of the collectivity. These perceptions are manifested, shaped, and perpetuated (i.e., justified, controlled) with comments such as: “everyone else,” “that’s not what they said,” and “that’s not how things are done around here.”

The nature of a particular agent is defined by his or her knowledge of rules, availability of resources, and perceptions of the collectivity. Another important factor in describing the nature of an agent is her or his level of discursive penetration. The level of discursive penetration, and ability to exercise it, hinges not only on how the agent is situated formally in the structure but also on his or her understanding and

perception of such positioning. Once we understand the nature of a given agent—based on his or her knowledge of rules, availability of resources, perceptions of the collectivity, and level of discursive penetration—we can consider further results from interactions with other agents.

Agents use communication (i.e., verbal, nonverbal, intentional, unintentional) to share with each other aspects of how they perceive the collectivity, their understanding and knowledge of rules, and variability in their access to resources. The significance and prevalence of this type of interaction is apparent in the communication literature on topics such as socialization and assimilation. These interactions are particularly salient for structurationist approaches using communication as an ontology because they (a) provide the context in which transactional processes (i.e., co-creation and management of knowledge and meaning) among individual agents occur; (b) facilitate opportunities for agents to interpret, influence, and respond to communicative acts; and (c) provide a basis upon which agents determine which rules and resources they perceive as relevant and available.

Specific interactions with other agents yield immediacy structures, which are grounded in individual perceptions and interpretations of co-created knowledge and meaning relevant to rules and resources. The meaning and relevance that an agent gives to a certain set of rules and resources determine the characteristics of the specific immediacy structure, which subsequently governs the activity of that agent. In other words, the process of creating an immediacy structure is also the process where individuals conclude whether or not certain rules apply.

Upon determining which rules pertain to a given agent in a given situation, agents enact their immediacy structures. Enactment of immediacy structures refers to what agents actually do in terms of behavior and actions. With communication as our ontological approach, this model proposes that observable communicative behaviors (*qua* the use of resources as symbols and implementation of structural rules) are the outcomes of perceptions, interpretations, and judgements (*qua* immediacy structures)—that are the products of interactions with other agents (i.e., transactions).

As agents manifest their immediacy structures through enactment, they create and recreate immediacy structures and immediacy systems. Immediacy systems are manifested by interactions among agents who share similar or compatible immediacy structures. In other words, immediacy systems are comprised of agents who interact with one another within a frame of variable acceptance of each others' actions (*qua* enactment of immediacy structure). Whereas immediacy structures reflect how agents give meaning to the way(s) they experience larger structures, immediacy systems reflect what aspects of the larger structure are actually experienced by the agent. For example, the way a night shift custodian experiences (*qua* immediacy system) working for a bank (*qua* structure) may be limited to interactions with other custodial staff and supervisors. Meanwhile, an executive vice president at the same bank (structure) will have an entirely different set of experiences (immediacy system), through his or her interactions with customers and other executives. Hence, although the custodian and executive vice president are part of the same system (bank) their immediacy systems are likely to be different. Furthermore, the interpretations,

enactments, and what is deemed acceptable enactments are likely to be different for the custodian than they are for the executive vice president.

Inclusion in, or exclusion from, immediacy systems, resulting from enactment of one's immediacy structure, shapes the nature of continued interaction with other agents. Further interaction with other agents, or lack thereof, invites a repetition of the cycle wherein agents may adjust (i.e., abandon, change, reinforce) their perceptions, interpretations, and enactments relevant to a structure's rules and resources.

Summary of Transactional Immediacy Structures

The model of transactional immediacy structures presented herein is an effort to (a) respond to criticisms of structuration, (b) build upon components of structuration that have been shown to be of particular relevance to organizational communication, and (c) explain what a transactional perspective of communication can add to a structurationist approach. This model is built upon an integrative approach which considers five topics—typology of structures, temporal considerations, determinism vs. voluntarism, duality of structure vs. dualism, communication as ontology—of concern in the development and critique of structurationist approaches. A transactional immediacy structure, therefore, is a manifestation of how a set(s) of interdependent individual agents—who draw upon rules and resources of various structures—define and shape each others' experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of how multiple structure types intersect and thereby mutually influencing their behaviors. Two figures are presented that illustrate (a) how immediacy structures are located in context of historical structural influences and

future residual effects with the possibility of sedimentation and change (Figure 1); and (b) processes whereby symbolic interactions among agents create structural properties and collectivities, which in turn become materials for ongoing transactions among agents resulting in continuous creation, enactment, and adjusting of immediacy structures (Figure 2). Table 2 summarizes key terms and definitions central to the core assumptions and key components of the model of transactional immediacy structures.

Table 2

Key Components of the Model of Transactional Immediacy Structures

<i>Agency</i>	The variable (i.e., different degrees across cases) and bounded (i.e., enabled and constrained by structures) ability of individuals to have purposefully (i.e., intentional) acted otherwise, resulting in potential change or reinforcement of preexisting structures.
<i>Agents</i>	Individuals Capable of purposeful and transformative action.
<i>Enactment</i>	Behaviors, actually engaged by agents, which may or may not coincide with rules of a structure (i.e., what people actually do).
<i>Immediacy System</i>	An outcome of enacted immediacy structures comprised of agents who interact with one another within a frame of variable acceptance of each others' actions. Whereas immediacy structures reflect how agents give meaning to their experience with the larger structures, immediacy systems reflect aspects of the larger system actually experienced.

Table 2 continued

Key Components of the Model of Transactional Immediacy Structures

<i>Residual Effects</i>	Memories of structural characteristics prior to elaboration or change which continue to have a bearing on subsequent structures.
<i>Resources</i>	Symbols (<i>qua</i> tools; sources for generating rules) used by agents in transactions with others to create meaning and cause structural elaboration. Resources receive meaning (significance) from transactions among individuals who (a) perceive particular resources as more or less relevant, and (b) have variable access to specific resources.
<i>Rules</i>	Linguistic acts (<i>qua</i> expressions or manifestations of understanding how to go on) originating from various levels and types of structures that govern transactions among agents. Rules receive their meaning (significance) from transactions among individuals who (a) perceive particular rules as more or less relevant, (b) use particular sets of rules to govern action in a given context, and (c) have variable knowledge of (and access to) specific resources.
<i>Sedimentation</i>	Properties of the structure that have not changed although structural elaboration may have occurred.

Table 2 continued

Key Components of the Model of Transactional Immediacy Structures

<i>Structural Elaboration</i>	Changes, of variable degrees (i.e., major, minor: visible, non-visible), to a given structure which postdate (i.e., are <i>not</i> simultaneous) action—and may be the purposeful or unintended consequences of agency (rule enactment).
<i>Structure</i>	Rules and resources, organized as properties of social systems. Structures (a) enable and limit action; (b) originate from interaction among agents; and (c) exist on multiple levels (see Table 1).

CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCH CONTEXT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS) is one organization that provides an appropriate context for examining how communication processes (i.e., immediacy structures) relate to various gender enactments (e.g., legitimizing alternatives, resisting and reinforcing institutional structures). The LDS church, according to its official website (www.lds.org), reports that 53 % of its nearly 12 million members worldwide (over 5 million in the U.S.) are female. Although church officers have published prescribed roles for men and women as well as official statements about gender (see Cornwall, 1994a), members of the church enact various competing ideals about gender roles (Beaman, 2001; Embry, 1998).

The prescribed role of Latter-day Saint women in church administration illustrates how their official roles (*qua* positions, titles) can appear to be precisely rigid while the expected (i.e., sanctioned) enactment of these roles remains ambiguous. An explication of how these roles can be precise yet ambiguous requires a brief review of church administration.

Local congregations (called *Wards*; ward membership is based on geographic location of residence) are governed by various councils that consist of both male and female lay members (i.e., volunteers). These councils operate under the direction of an all male Bishopric (a Bishop, two counselors, and various clerks and secretaries). This system of church administration mirrors similar systems of councils that operate at the regional (i.e., Stake) and worldwide (i.e., general) levels. Within this hierarchy, wards function under the direction of stake officers who, in turn, are supervised by

officers at general level (i.e., also known as general authorities). Also, in the LDS church, priesthood (*qua* institutional authority to preside over church affairs) is reserved for males. Within the church's formal hierarchy, most administrative and leadership offices are filled only by priesthood holders. Women are not ordained to the priesthood, but they do serve in key leadership positions and serve on advisory boards (i.e., councils) at the local, regional, and worldwide levels. For example, the primary organization (for children 18 months to 12 years old), the young women's organization (for girls ages 12 to 18), and the Relief Society (for all adult women) are all led solely by women in the church. However, in the formal organization these positions remain subordinate to various priesthood offices (e.g., Bishops and General Authorities; Heaton, 1998). This institutional structure situates women as subordinate to men (Cornwall, 1994a). Nevertheless, general authorities of the church have specified that in the governing councils of the church (at all levels), although presided over by priesthood officers (i.e., men), female (non-priesthood) officers' voices should be heard before decisions are made (cf. Ballard, 1997; Hinckley, 2004). In other words, although women cannot receive ordination to the priesthood (*qua* institutional authority to preside over church affairs), they are expected to function as leaders and fulfill key advisory roles. The outcomes (in terms of women's influence) of such direction in any given case may well be determined by a particular woman's assertiveness coupled with a particular male's (priesthood holder) willingness to listen to the input given by female (non-priesthood holders) council members. Recent reports suggest that the ideal of women having equal voice in male-led councils at

local levels may not be enacted as envisioned by general authorities (see Hinckley, 2004). Hence, despite prescribed roles and sanctioned enactments, the uncertainty of the magnitude of women's influence on the Latter-day Saint organization persists.

As one of the fastest growing churches in North America (Stark, 1998), it is important to note that not only are the majority of members female but there are also more women than men who actively participate and attend the LDS church (Cornwall, 1994a; Heaton, 1998). Beaman (2001) and Cornwall (1994a) question how a church that does not grant its women ordination to the priesthood could grow and receive such significant support from women. They also ask why women do not hold more significant leadership positions. Such inquiries stem from focusing on a narrow conceptualization of priesthood as a dominating structure without consideration of either larger societal contexts or the multiple meanings (*qua* immediacy structures) created by individuals interacting (*qua* transactions between agents) and their multiple enactments (*qua* immediacy systems) of gender.

Fundamentally, women are portrayed as fulfilling acts of charity while doctrines specify that only men hold the priesthood. At face value this appears as a blatant indication that only men may hold administrative and decision-making positions. However, statements from these men of authority, particularly recent rhetoric (e.g., Ballard, 1997; Hinckley, 2004), continue a trend toward seeking to transform this perception (cf. Cornwall, 1994a). More importantly, the enactment of gender roles among some members of the church suggests something entirely different. Nevertheless, whatever degree of administrative and decision making roles

women have, these positions are still, in the formal structure, subordinate to the male role. Additionally, pervasive use of labels such as brother and sister function to further delineate gender differences. Therefore, the apparent contemporary conceptualization of gender roles in the formal structure is at best ambiguous.

Howell (1998) posits that gender issues within a religious movement should be understood in terms of gender relations in the larger society within which the particular religious group operates. The LDS church has had to respond to social changes regarding how gender roles are construed in a way that strikes a balance between accommodation (to attract newcomers) and resistance to change (to maintain credibility with traditionalists; Iannaccone & Miles, 1990). Iannaccone and Miles further state “although a totally unresponsive religion must eventually lose its power to convert, a religion that upholds no distinctive values lacks credibility and discourages commitment” (p. 1247). Mormon women have differing ideas about the patriarchal structure of the church, sex roles, priesthood ordination for women, and gender identities (Beaman, 2001). Beaman posits “to those of us on the outside, the priesthood seems to be a blatant institutionalization of patriarchy. From the perspective of some LDS women, it offers help rather than oppression” (2001, p. 83). Hence, analyses of gender in the LDS church and among its members must be more complex than simply observing that males hold the priesthood and females do not.

Furthermore, the scope of LDS gender role analyses, from an organizational communication perspective, should extend beyond specific organizational offices and consider the influence of the organization upon individuals’ lives outside the

organization. As an organization that is highly characterized by values and ideologies pertaining to daily behaviors of its members, the church influences how members enact roles in a variety of contexts outside the church organization (e.g., home, community, workplace).

Research Questions

The LDS church is one illustration of how research on gender in an organizational context can be more sophisticated than simple responses to the traditional idea of men having positions of dominance over women. Such research would provide a deeper analysis of communicative issues. The model of transactional immediacy structures introduced in the previous chapter provides a more sophisticated framework for analysis of gender enactment in this voluntary organization and among its members in their lives beyond the organization. Specifically, and of particular interest for organizational communication scholars, the model would ask a number of questions about the creation and enactment of gender role structures (i.e., not sex differences) in this organization.

First, one of the core assumptions of the model of transactional immediacy structures is that there are multiple levels of structures and that within this context there could be a variety of immediacy structure types which should be considered. The variety of ideas about gender roles among LDS church members (Beaman, 2001; Embry, 1998), and dissonance between these ideas (Cornwall, 1994a; Iannaccone & Miles, 1990), illustrate the possibility of multiple types of immediacy structures created and enacted by church members. Therefore, one of this study's research

questions asks about the types of immediacy structures relevant to gender roles that exist among church members.

RQ1: On the basis of LDS church members' reports of their perceptions of gender roles, what types of immediacy structures exist among members of the LDS church?

Figure 1 demonstrates how immediacy structures are located in context of historical structural influences and future residual effects with the possibility of sedimentation and change. Within this framework immediacy structures can be understood as (a) having origins in multiple levels of structures (societal, inter-organizational, organizational, group, familial, interpersonal); (b) being embedded in a context of multiple levels of structures; and (c) maintaining the potential to cause varying degrees of change on larger structures. Literature on gender roles within the LDS community suggests that how these roles are defined has changed over time in ways that reflect responses to societal structures beyond the church organization (cf. Cornwall, 1994a; Beaman, 2001; Iannacone & Miles, 1990). Similarly, church teachings are likely to have a systemic effect on the lives and actions of its followers. In other words, implicitly as well as explicitly prescribed rules of the organization are likely to shape how members act in contexts beyond the church environment (e.g., family, work, school, other volunteer organizations). A structurationist approach to gender role enactment among LDS church members—using the transactional immediacy structure model as a framework—would inquire about the resources used to create immediacy structures, the role of other structures in enabling and

constraining the creation and enactment of immediacy structures, and the possible reciprocity between various levels of structures. Hence, the following research question:

RQ2: What rules and resources do LDS church members draw upon in the creation of immediacy structures regarding their perceptions of gender roles?

The core component of the model of transactional immediacy structures (IMSTs) is interaction with other agents. Understanding the nature of an individual's IMST from a communication approach involves transactional processes which begin with perceptions of collectivity and interpretations of interactions with other agents—as illustrated in Figure 2. Additionally, central components of the macro theoretical problems Giddens and his critics grapple with are structure, agency, and structural elaboration (potential for change). Thus, the third research question:

RQ3: On the basis of LDS church members' reports of their perceptions of gender roles, what are the roles and nature of agency, structure, interaction, and structural elaboration in immediacy structures used by members of the LDS church?

At the heart of all the philosophical debates and criticisms surrounding structuration and Giddens' various propositions is a common desire to explain the nature of constraints imposed upon individuals by societal structures, the role of individuals in creating and perpetuating such constraints, and the degree to which individuals have agency and are free to act. Therefore, the final research question addresses the constraining and enabling functions of structures.

RQ4: How do structures constrain and enable the creation and enactment of LDS church members' immediacy structures regarding their perceptions of gender roles?

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

A qualitative approach was used to address the four research questions listed above. This section explains the researcher's role, data collection, and data analysis.

Researcher's Role

My background as a male Caucasian who has previously held various ward and stake leadership positions in the LDS church (a) positions me as an insider capable of understanding the organization and data in ways that outsiders may not, (b) invites the possibility of a biased interpretation of the data, and (c) brings the potential of influencing participant responses to interview questions. Acknowledging these facts helps me (a) draw upon additional knowledge from personal experience and anecdotal observations that clarify and corroborate participants' assertions; (b) bring awareness to, and minimize the effect of, personal biases, and (c) account for my potential influence on responses during analysis.

Gaining access to LDS church members is difficult because (a) official church policy prohibits the use of membership records for any non-church business, (b) the church has not made most of its proprietary research available to the public, and (c) the church does not formally endorse outside research (Cornwall, 1994b; Duke, 1998). This has led social scientific research on Mormonism to rely heavily upon sampling procedures which are either limited or cumbersome. Bahr and Forste (1998) explain that previous research on LDS members has been criticized for its limited focus on Utah residents (i.e., the location of church headquarters and church-owned Brigham Young University) rather than church members, not considering members

outside of western states with high percentages of Mormons per capita (e.g., Arizona, California, Idaho, Utah) or using census data. Therefore, snowball sampling of church members (beginning with contacts from midwestern and southern states) was used as it: (a) did not require use of church records or church endorsement, (b) is more representative than sampling areas with high concentrations of church members, and (c) is more practical.

Institutional review board permission was obtained before conducting interviews. Participants were assured that (a) their identity and responses would not be provided to the church organization, (b) responses would remain anonymous (i.e., pseudonyms were used), and (c) any raw data containing any identifying information would be kept confidential. Respondents were informed of the purposes of the interviews as well as their right to withdraw from the interview at any time. As preventive measures, participants were (a) notified that the interviewer is not a qualified counselor, (b) encouraged to contact local church leaders for support should they become distressed by the interview, (c) provided with contact information for LDS social services, and (d) informed that this research, although permitted, is not sponsored by the church, and that their participation would have no bearing upon their status with the church.

Data Collection

Sample

Snowball sampling generated a purposive sample of male and female adult married members of the LDS church who attend weekly and hold some position or

calling (i.e., requests from church leaders to “fill specific administrative, teaching, or service-oriented positions”; Pitcher, 1992, p. 249). This included those who had been married for the majority of their adult lives regardless of whether their spouses were church members or participants in the study; and those who had been married for the majority of their adult lives but were currently divorced or widowed. The first step of gathering a snowball sample entailed contacting church members, with whom I have close relationships beyond the context of church meetings and activities, in four states (Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Tennessee). Potential participants were solicited from these acquaintances. Additional contacts were solicited from participants until theoretical saturation was achieved.

Nature of Agents

Participants were asked to complete a short survey providing personal and professional demographics and information about their participation in the church. While this sample of church members is similar in that all were active in the church, married, and Caucasian, the sample was varied in terms of church experiences, geographic mobility, education, and profession.

The forty participants (20 female; 20 male) reside in four states (Arkansas = 10; Kansas = 12; Missouri = 10; Tennessee = 8). Fifteen participants served church missions as young adults. Thirty-eight participants’ spouses were active members while one was deceased and one did not attend church. Participants ranged in *age* (range 23 to 66 years; $M = 45$; $SD = 13.11$); *tenure as church members* (range 9 to 57 years; $M = 31.25$; $SD = 12.81$); *age when baptized into the church* (range = 8 to 42

years; $M = 13.65$; $SD = 9.77$); and *education level* (some high school = 1; high school diploma or equivalent = 2; some college = 8; associate's degree = 4; bachelor's degree = 14; some graduate study = 4; master's degree = 2; JD, MD, or other terminal degree = 1; Ph.D.= 4). Participants also represented a wide range of professions including medical professionals, researchers, K-12 educators, university professors, service providers, business managers, support personnel, students, homemakers, sales people, and disabled individuals (none reported themselves to be unemployed).

Another demographic useful in illustrating the variety of experience represented is *current and previous church positions*. Participants' current and previous positions were placed into 11 categories which account for important distinctions in types of callings and geographical scope of the positions' jurisdictions (e.g., ward leaders focus on issues within a congregation; stake leaders focus on issues across several congregations).

Ward support positions ($f = 12$ current positions; 63 previous positions) are non-leadership positions (e.g., music leader, Sunday school teacher, assistant youth advisers) that provide essential assistance for other administrative and leadership positions. Ward youth leaders ($f = 9$ current; 23 previous) are adult women and men who, under the direction of their Bishop, are responsible for advising and helping plan and carry out activities for the young women and young men ages 12 to 18. Members holding ward priesthood leadership and administration positions ($f = 13$ current; 44 previous; including 2 current and 2 previous Bishops) are men who in their function as administrative heads (*qua* priesthood quorum leaders) fulfill various

ecclesiastical and decision-making duties while presiding over all other positions within the Ward. The assistants, secretaries, and clerks for the respective administrative heads are included in this category. Ward Relief Society leadership positions ($f = 3$ current; 26 previous) are held by females who are given responsibility to lead the congregation's women (ages 18 and above). Ward primary leadership positions ($f = 2$ current; 16 previous) are typically held by females—and entail the responsibility of overseeing the instruction of children ages 18 months to 12 years.

The following categories reflect experience at the Stake level of church administration. It is important to separate stake positions from ward positions because their hierarchical scope makes them fundamentally different. Otherwise the task of each type of position is similar at both the ward and stake levels. Stake positions held by participants include: Stake support ($f = 6$ current; 1 previous); Stake youth leadership ($f = 0$ current; 6 previous); Stake priesthood administration ($f = 1$ current; 12 previous, including 2 Stake Presidents); Stake Relief Society leadership ($f = 1$ current; 4 previous); Stake primary leaders ($f = 0$ current; 3 previous). Additionally, a few participants indicated service as temple workers ($f = 7$ current; 3 previous).

To further illustrate the complexity and variance in participants' geographic background, participants were asked to identify the stakes (local geographic administrative unit consisting of 8 to 15 wards; ward membership is based on geographic location of residence) where they lived when they first joined the church (*qua* original stake) and their *current stake*. Although participants were from five

current stakes (North Little Rock, AR; Topeka, KS; Springfield, MO; Platte City, MO; Memphis, TN), their *original stakes* represented 26 locations in 13 states and one European location. In summary, this demographic information indicates that church members in this study have varied experience, and their geographic homes are varied and extend well beyond the limitations of typical previous research on this population.

Interview Procedure

Forty face-to-face interviews (range = 23 to 89 minutes; $M = 47$) were recorded on audio tape with participants' informed consent. Most interviews were held in participants' homes; two participants chose to be interviewed in the home of a mutual acquaintance; one asked to be interviewed at his workplace. The interviews were conducted where the participant could feel some privacy. To further protect the participant's privacy, the spouse and other family members were asked to not be present during the interview.

Critical Incident Technique

Conrad (1993) recommends critical incident technique (CIT; Flanagan, 1954) as an appropriate method for structurationist studies grounded in a communication approach. Previous research has demonstrated the validity and reliability of CIT (Query & Kreps, 1993). Specifically, CIT is advocated for organizational communication research (Chell, 1998; Query & Kreps, 1993).

Using the critical incident method, I asked participants to tell me about a time when they came to understand what appropriate and acceptable behavior was for a

man or woman in the church. Following initial responses to this inquiry a series of semi-guided follow-up questions were asked (see Appendix A for the interview guide). Results from three pilot interviews suggested that this interview guide would yield appropriate data for this study's research questions. Because the interviews were conversational and open, participants typically led the interview with their narratives and my follow up questions were impromptu and designed to seek clarification. Thus the interview guide was used to provide general topics for further discussion in cases where initial narratives did not include such topics.

Data Analysis

The 40 interviews produced slightly more than 31 hours of interviewer-interviewee conversation and resulted in complex nonlinear narratives of participants' experiences—most spanning a lifetime. The detailed descriptions of personal experiences demand qualitative analytical methods capable of revealing processes and reflecting participants' stories in a more comprehensive manner than thematic or content analysis. Therefore, concept mapping was chosen. As Lanzing (1997) explains:

Concept mapping is a technique for representing knowledge in graphs.

Knowledge graphs are networks of concepts. Networks consist of nodes (points/vertices) and links (arcs/edges). Nodes represent concepts and links represent the relations between concepts. (p. 1)

While concept mapping has traditionally been used as an instructional tool aiding in the communication of complex ideas and the integration of new and old

ideas, it has not typically been utilized as a method for the analysis of empirical data. Nonetheless, the principle of identifying and illustrating visually multiple concepts, and their connections to one another, is useful for analysis of personal histories such as those disclosed in critical incident interviews.

This procedure allows for identification of themes and metaphors that appear within participants' stories. But it also facilitates observation of less obvious, yet significant, shifts in assumptions, beliefs, and behaviors—and multiple factors contributing to those shifts—over long periods of time and in multiple contexts (e.g., family roles, church positions, employment) within a particular participant's telling of his or her experience(s).

Creating Concept Maps

Interview data for each participant were plotted on concept maps (see Figures 3, 4, and 5) to illustrate each individual's descriptions of his or her experiences relative to gender roles. To ensure that the concept maps provided an accurate and comprehensive illustration of each agent's multiple experiences and multiple sources of gender role information (*qua* rules and resources) it was important to analyze the sequence of participant narratives as well as the sequence and magnitude of events described in the narrative.

Specifically, questions from the interview guide and other follow-up questions seeking clarification resulted in further self-disclosure and elaboration of specifics relevant to the narrative. Hence, within the interview chronological connections between salient events do not appear in a linear fashion. Furthermore, some events

briefly mentioned early in the interview may have originally appeared non-consequential but, with increased disclosure and specificity later in the interview, proved to be of greater significance. Therefore simply plotting components and identifying themes would have missed integral connections and detailed issues.

Due to the complexity and nonlinear structure, each interview was reviewed multiple times (3 to 10 times; depending on complexity) to capture all important events and accurately illustrate temporal connections between events as described by participants. Listening to each interview multiple times also facilitated richer researcher awareness of participant emotion—as demonstrated by crying, laughter, vocal variety, and vocalized pauses.

Identifying Key Topics

During the first audio review, key words were plotted to capture and illustrate initial impressions of possible events and connections that could be used to map the participant's experiences. Blank paper was used to minimize the possibility of imposing the theoretical model and to ensure that concept maps were data-driven. At this stage the focus was limited to making preliminary connections between events, topics, and sub-topics as they emerged in the conversation. For each topic identified the counter number was recorded to facilitate future review of the topic or event and its connection to other topics or events.

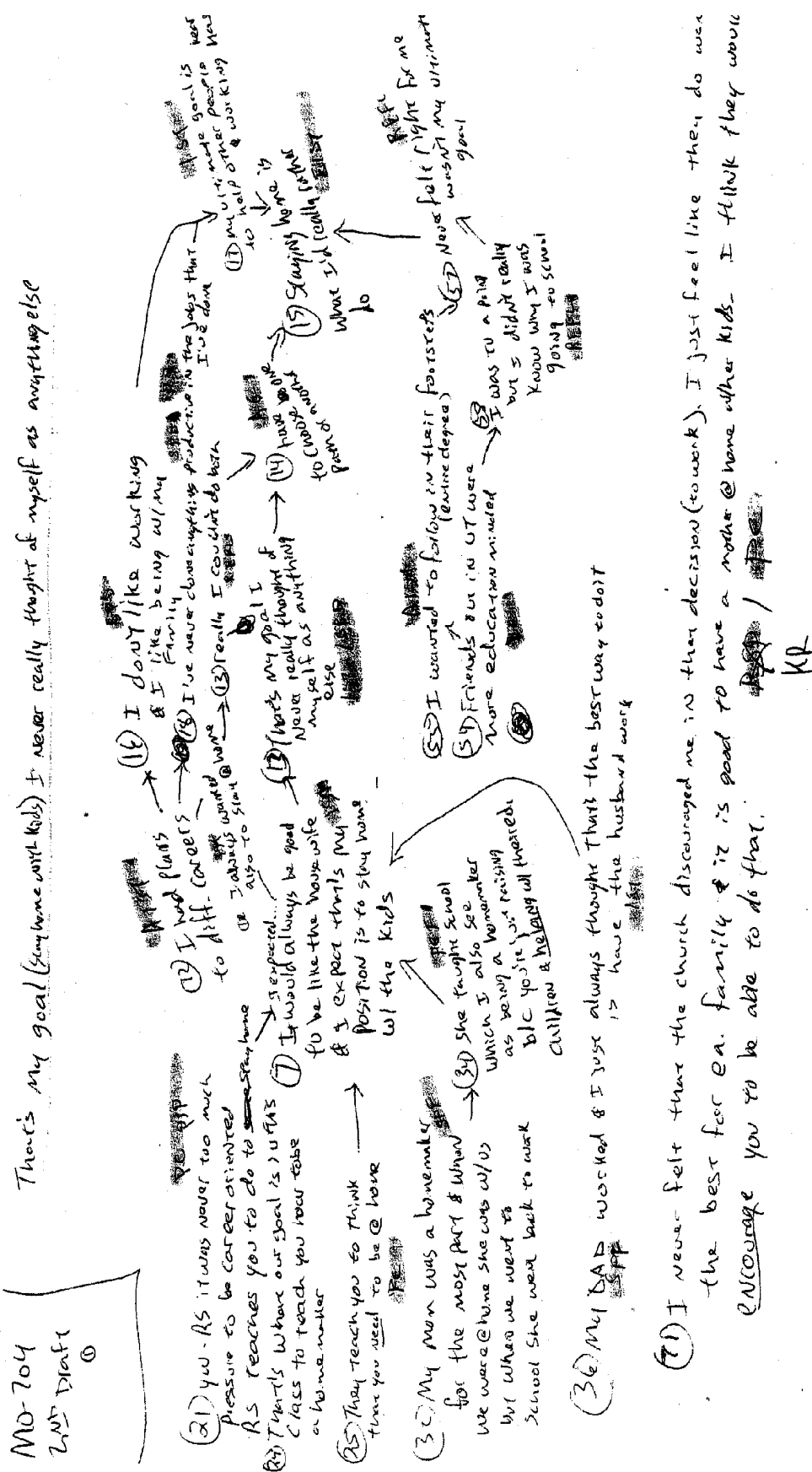
A second audio review was conducted to seek additional events or topics that should be plotted on the map and to clarify temporal connections. At this stage the focus was making sure that all salient events and topics—and their connections—

were accurately accounted for. This step was repeated multiple times until there were no more identifiable events or topics.

Identifying Multiple Maps

The next stage of audio review was to determine whether an interview required multiple concept maps. Three indicators—new topic, depth of explanation, degree of influence—suggested the need for additional concept maps. First, some participants discussed substantially different topics. For example, Cindy's pressure from her brother to stay home with her children is a different topic than her experience with a Bishop's counselor who insisted that she plan a young women's activity according to his ideas instead of her own. Substantially different topics were not placed on the same map.

Figure 5: Concept Map Example 3



The second indicator for additional concept maps was the depth of explanation as evidenced by the varied details a participant provided about a particular event or topic. Repetition and quantity were not considered sufficient reasons for creating additional concept maps. For example, Susan's description of how she came to understand that "as a woman if you want to do something you can do it" involved detailed accounts of (a) how her mother and grandmother provided a legacy of strong women, and (b) the process of deciding to pursue—and ultimately earning a Ph.D. Her description of the specific experiences of a Mormon mother pursuing graduate education in physics included many details that varied substantially from the explanation of her legacy of strong women. Susan used two sets of supportive materials—the legacy of strong women and pursuing her education—each of which had its own unique richness and complexity while falling under the umbrella of the same theme (a woman being able to do something she wants), thus warranting separate concept maps.

The degree of influence that a given experience may have had on a participant is another indicator that additional concept maps are needed. Nancy's interview yielded a concept map which illustrated her experience of not attending church for several years. She also describes the influence of her husband's choice to join and attend church on her subsequent decisions and behaviors. This event resulted in substantive changes in Nancy's experience of such a magnitude that it could not be adequately illustrated on the same concept map as her previous choices and behaviors.

As new maps were identified, they were numbered according to the order in which they became apparent to the researcher, and given a title using words of the participant. The interview was then audio reviewed again to check for accuracy and completeness of the concept map(s) and components therein. Throughout the process of identifying and labeling new concept maps it was also necessary to identify and label components of each concept map.

On the basis of the theoretical model (see Figure 2), a number of concept map components—*agency, immediacy system, immediacy structure, immediacy structure enactment, interaction with other agents, perceptions of collectivity, structural properties, symbolic interaction*—that, were expected to appear were labeled with corresponding codes. Repeated listening to the interview revealed the need to refine several components. For example, *perceptions of collectivity* was further refined to address a specific subset (*perceptions of collectivity, family*) of the component. Further refining of components was necessary when the absence of an anticipated component was explicitly mentioned—as was often the case with *agency, interaction with other agents*, and *symbolic interaction*. Resources and rules were also refined to address more specifically *access to resources*, and *knowledge of each*. Additionally, four emergent components—*self perception, biological event, time*, and *internal reflection*—were common across the set of concept maps. After anticipated, refined, and emergent components were identified and labeled, further review of concept maps ensured that each emergent or refined component had received equal consideration for inclusion or exclusion across all maps.

Analyzing Concept Maps

The process of analysis began with looking for patterns across individuals' concept maps to identify similarities and differences in (a) language and phraseology used to describe experiences, and (b) processes whereby individuals arrive at enactment of gender roles. The specific roles, while important, were of lesser concern in this analysis than the processes by which participants came to them.

In accordance with the interpretive model exemplified by Baxter, Braithwaite, and colleagues (Baxter, Braithwaite, Bryant, & Wagner, 2004; Baxter, Braithwaite, Golish, & Olson, 2002; Braithwaite & Eckstein, 2003), concept maps were analyzed in five steps. First, the data was reviewed in its entirety before categorizing (Creswell, 1998; Lindolf, 1995). Second, concept maps were reviewed further with more purposeful attention given to recurring dialectical themes (Lindolf, 1995). The constant comparative method (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) guided this stage of the analysis. Open coding (emergent process of adding and revising initial categories; Creswell, 1998) and axial coding (interconnecting categories and identifying themes; Creswell, 1998) were used to identify categories (*qua* map types), attributes of those categories (*qua* map components illustrating various processes), and relationships among categories and subcategories. The third step of analysis was the creation of conceptual maps of the categories (*qua* immediacy structure types) and their attributes. Specifically, during this phase of the analysis immediacy structure types were further described and defined. Also during this phase examples, which illustrate and corroborate each category outlined, were drawn from the data. Baxter,

Braithwaite, Golish, and Olson (2002) explain that this process helps “distinguish the categories and reduce ambiguity among them” (p. 9). Next, additional synthesizing of the findings was sought using the refined category system. Finally, after creating prototype concept maps to illustrate each type of immediacy structure, the interviews were listened to again—while reviewing the original concept maps—to check for accuracy, consistency, and rival explanations of the findings. This process was also useful in identifying topical (*qua* specific rules and resources used by participants), and procedural themes (i.e., patterns in specific processes illustrated by concept maps) that were common and emergent in the data set.

Emerging Concepts

During the analysis of the interviews and creation of concept maps, four dimensions emerged that were consistent with the theoretical premise of the study (agency, interaction, structure, and structural elaboration). Hence, further explanation and illustration of how each of these dimensions was situated in the participants’ experiences was considered necessary. Therefore, a second analytical tool was implemented. For each participant a 4-dimensional (4-D) graph (see Figures 6, 7, and 8) was created to illustrate how each of his or her experiences (*qua* concept maps) would be positioned on a geometrical plane comprising the four dimensions: agency, interaction, structure, and structural elaboration. Together the concept maps and 4-D graphs, as analytical tools, provide comprehensive visual representation of the interview data which ultimately facilitated further analysis of the complex non-linear participant narratives.

Creating 4-D Graphs

Because the magnitude of each of the four dimension's (*agency, structure, interaction, elaboration*) presence varied across all concept maps, and within each concept map, it was important to reflect and differentiate simultaneously the various degrees of agency, structure, interaction, and structural elaboration within each concept map. To accomplish this, the researcher assessed the level (i.e., *high, moderately high, moderate, moderately low, low*) of each dimension's presence in each concept map—based on the degree of influence on a participant's behavior (as suggested in his or her narrative). Consistent with key theoretical concerns addressed in the structuration literature, agency and structure were plotted on the x and y axes, respectively. Additionally, to highlight the separate but highly interdependent nature of all four dimensions, the degrees of interaction (represented by concentric circles) and structural elaboration (represented by tails of varying length) were plotted on the same graph.

Figure 6: 4-D Graph Example 1

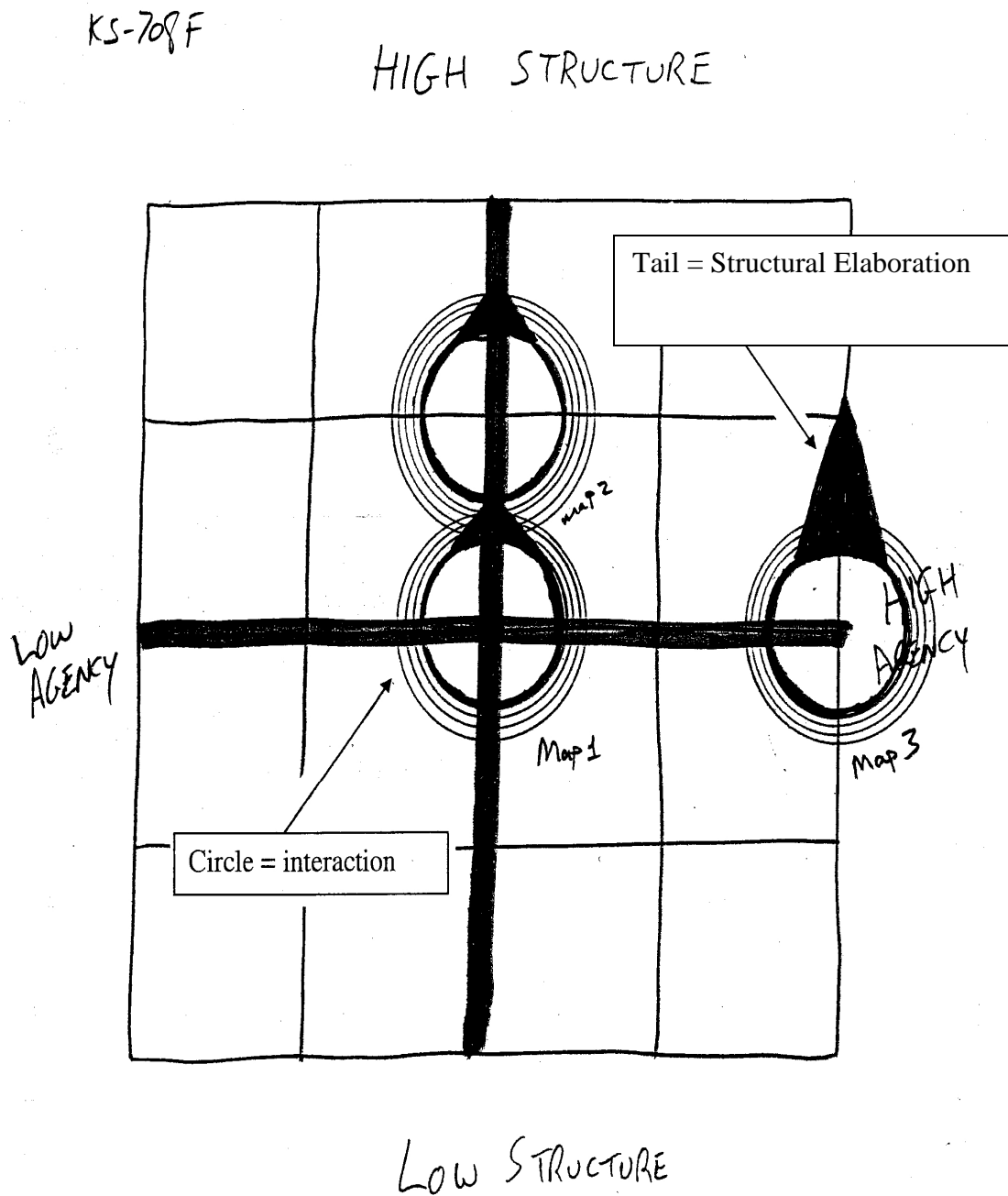


Figure 7: 4-D Graph Example 2

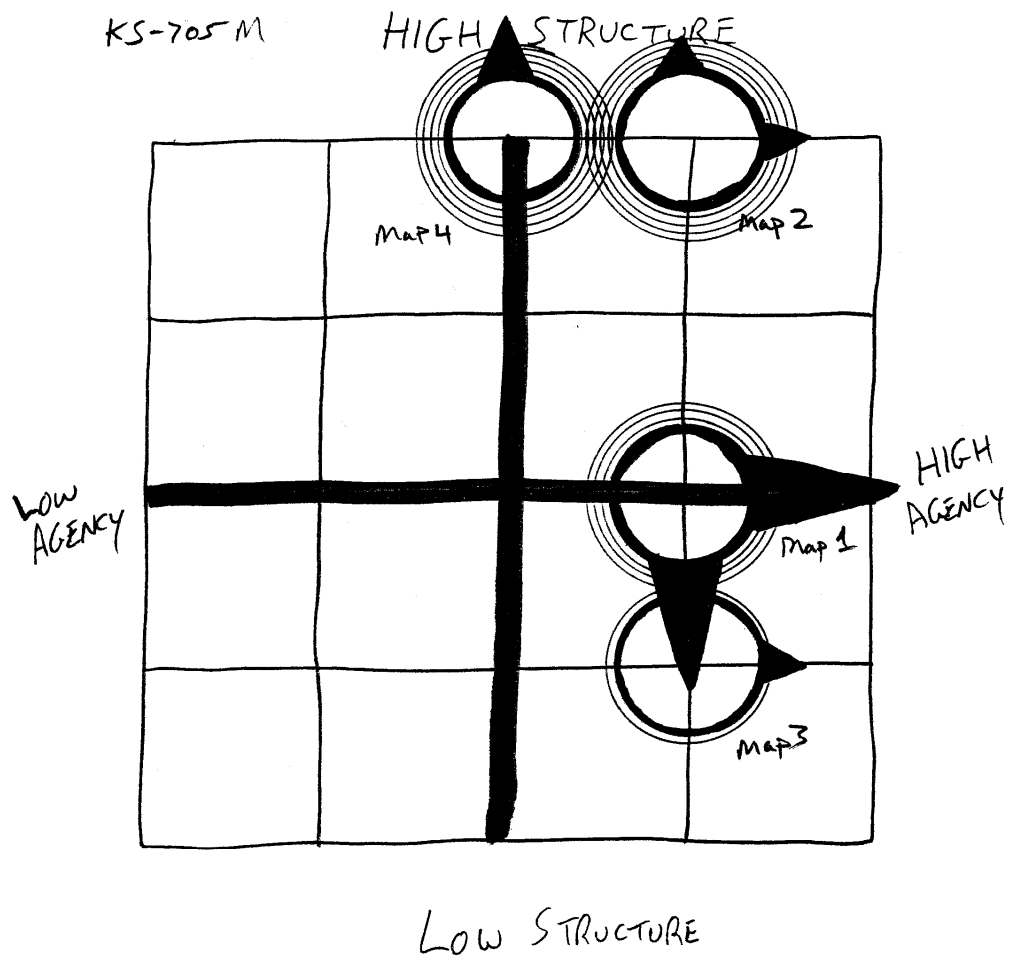
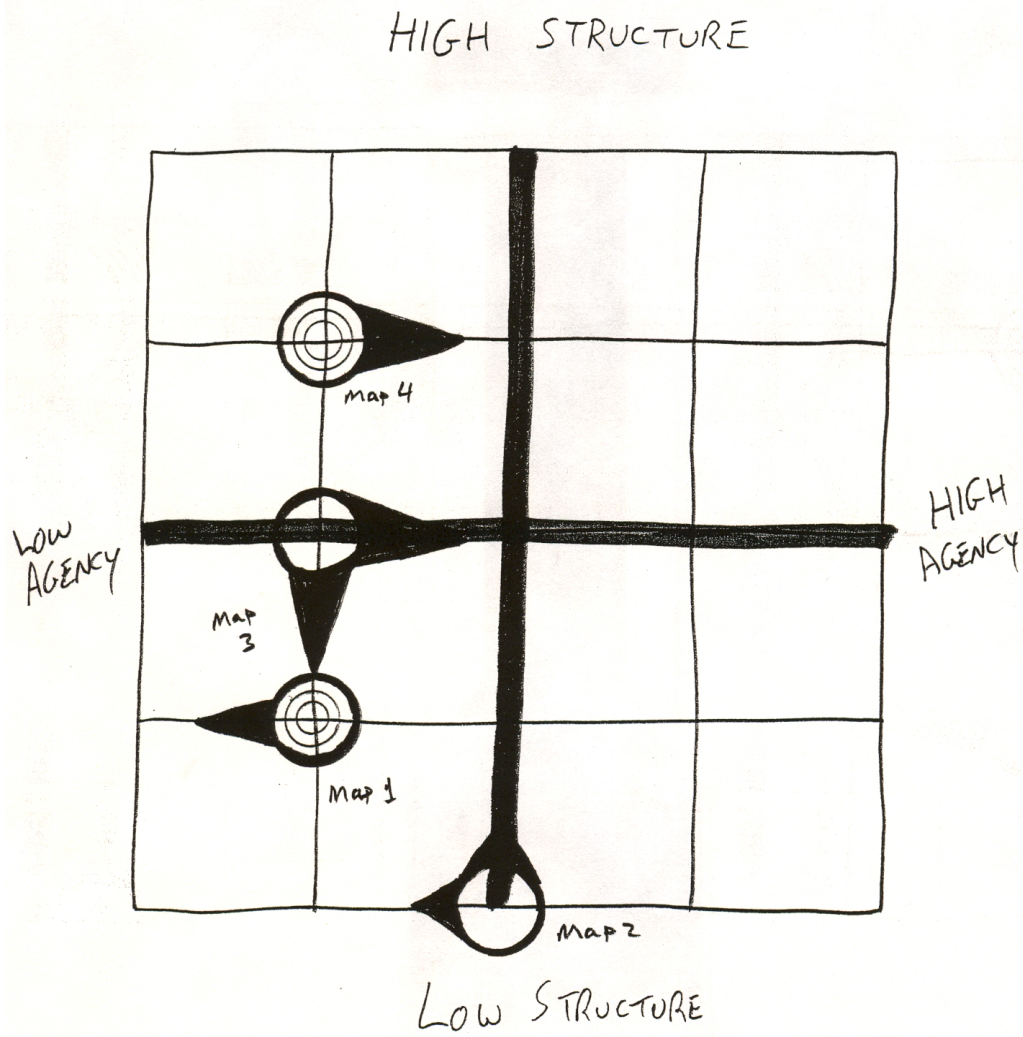


Figure 8: 4-D Graph Example 3

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Plotting 4 Dimensions

First, *agency* (indicated on the *x* axis) includes any indication of the individual's perceptions that decisions and behaviors could have been different on the basis of personal choice (i.e., perceived ability to have acted otherwise; had options). *High agency* (far right end of *x* axis) was marked when participants made explicit and constant reference to purposeful choices and explicit expression of the availability of options. *Moderately high agency* (mid-way point in the right half of the *x* axis) was demonstrated by participants' frequent, and possibly indirect, indication that behaviors and decisions resulted from the perceived ability to choose and the acknowledgment of their ability to have acted otherwise. Maps with *moderate agency* (middle of the *x* axis) were those with either (a) infrequent and ambiguous discussion of choices or (b) no mention of agency (i.e., the participant may have not denied agency but also did not acknowledge it). Maps where the participants demonstrated implicit perception of not having choice and in which there was little or no mention of agency were labeled *moderately low agency* (mid-way point in the left half of the *x* axis). Maps in which participants' denial of agency or expression of not having choice were explicit were labeled *low agency* (far left end of *x* axis).

The second dimension, *structure* (indicated on the *y* axis) includes any societal, organizational, and familial structural properties (e.g., knowledge of rules, access to resources) that appear in the concept map as having influenced decisions and behaviors. The explicit indication that behaviors and choices resulted from perceptions of the structure's rules and constant references to structural properties

were indicators of *high structure* (highest point of the y axis). *Moderately high structure* (mid-way point in the upper half of the y axis) was observed by frequent indication that structure may have influenced decisions and behaviors. *Moderate structure* (middle of the y axis) was indicated by implicit reference(s) to structure and implicit acknowledgement of structural influences. Maps with *moderately low structure* (mid-way point in the lower half of the y axis) were those where infrequent or token mentioning of structure may have occurred or in which the participant implied that structure does not influence decisions and behaviors. Maps were labeled as *low structure* (lowest point of the y axis) when there was no reference to structural properties or explicit claims were made that structure does not influence decisions and behaviors.

Interaction, the third dimension, includes any form of interaction with other agents that appeared in the concept map as having influenced decisions and behaviors indicated on the map. Plotting *interaction* involved situating circles—of varying sizes defined by the amount of interaction (diameter lengths: *High interaction* = 1 ¼ inch; *moderately high interaction* = 1 inch; *moderate interaction* = ¾ inch; *moderately low interaction* = ½ inch; *low interaction* = ¼ inch) —at the point on the graph where the agency (x axis) and structure (y axis) dimensions meet. *High interaction* was assigned when there was explicit indication that participants' behaviors and choices resulted from interaction with others and constant references to those interactions. *Moderately high interaction* was demonstrated by frequent indication that interaction may have influenced decisions and behaviors. In cases where participants offered

implicit references to interaction or implicit acknowledgment of having been influenced by interaction their maps were labeled *moderate interaction*. Infrequent or token mentioning of interaction and implicit claims that interaction did not influence decisions and behaviors resulted in categorization of the map as *moderately low interaction*. *Low interaction* was assigned to those in which participants did not reference interaction or explicit claims that interaction had no role in influencing decisions and behaviors.

The fourth dimension, *structural elaboration*, refers to the slight changes that may occur over time as demonstrated within each concept map. Specifically, each individual's immediacy structures change slightly, and sometimes drastically. The theoretical approach of this study, coupled with the specific information offered by the data, demand that *change* and *elaboration* not be conceptualized as synonymous.

The use of elaboration as a term to describe an important dimension emerging from this data set is influenced by Archer's (1982, 1990) notion of structural elaboration, which suggests that most individuals do not change the organization but that they may cause some minor morphing. However, minor changes (*qua* elaboration) do occur within each individual's immediacy structures, as demonstrated by concept maps of their narratives. Thus, *structural elaboration* is an important dimension emerging from the data which needs to be illustrated along with structure, agency, and interaction.

Because *structural elaboration*, as a fourth dimension illustrated on a two-dimensional plane, can be observed in each of the other dimensions (i.e., structure,

agency, interaction), and can happen in multiple directions (i.e., more elaboration, less elaboration) simultaneously, a number of techniques for its illustration on the 4-D graphs were required. First, *structural elaboration* pertaining to *structure* and *agency* was illustrated by attaching tails (in the shape of triangles)—of varying lengths defined by the amount of *structural elaboration* (*high elaboration* = 1 ¼ inch tail; *moderately high elaboration* = 1 inch tail; *moderate elaboration* = ¾ inch tail; *moderately low elaboration* = ½ inch tail; *low elaboration* = ¼ inch tail)—to the previously plotted *interaction* circles. Each tail was situated to point in the direction of the corresponding *structural elaboration* (i.e., more structure, less structure, more agency, less agency). In cases where there was no *structural elaboration* relative to agency or structure, no tail was added.

Next, concentric circles, used to illustrate *structural elaboration* related to *interaction*, were placed around (i.e., external circles = increased interaction) or within (i.e., internal circles = decreased interaction) the original interaction circle. The number of concentric circles was defined by the amount of *structural elaboration* indicated by the particular map (*high elaboration* = 5 circles; *moderately high elaboration* = 4 circles; *moderate elaboration* = 3 circles; *moderately low elaboration* = 2 circles; *low elaboration* = 1 circle). In cases where there was no *structural elaboration* relative to interaction, no circle was added.

While specific techniques for illustrating the degree of structural elaboration on the 4-D graph varied depending upon whether the elaboration occurred in structure, agency, or interaction, definitions for the various levels (*high elaboration*,

moderately high elaboration, moderate elaboration, moderately low elaboration, low elaboration) remained consistent across the structure, agency, and interaction dimensions. *High elaboration* maps included explicit references to changes in personal attitudes, perceptions, behaviors, and rules; some of which may be radically different at the end of the concept map as compared to initial attitudes. *Moderately high elaboration* maps are those wherein references to slight changes in personal attitudes, perceptions, rules, and behaviors are expressed and where some change is evident but not radical. Maps in which participants acknowledge some adaptations and evolution of personal attitudes, perceptions, rules, and behaviors were categorized as *moderate elaboration*. *Moderately low elaboration* maps were indicated by participants' frequent references to initial rules and perceptions as the basis for decisions, and behaviors and possibly accompanied by minor adaptations. *Low elaboration* maps were those in which (a) a lack of change from the initial immediacy structure was explicit, and (b) there were continuous references to initial rules as basis for decisions.

Interview data were used to create concept maps (Figures 3, 4, and 5) and 4-D graphs (Figures 6, 7, and 8), which were subsequently used for analysis and interpretations. Interviews resulted in a range of concept maps (total $n = 108$; range of maps per participant = 1 to 5). Plotting all concept maps for each individual on one 4-D graph per participant ($n = 40$) facilitated (a) visualization of how each map was geometrically situated in terms of four emergent dimensions—structure, agency,

interaction, and structural elaboration; and (b) interpretation of the data using the individual (not the concept map) as the unit of analysis.

Identifying Patterns in Connections Between Map Types and 4-D graphs

The processes of concept map (*qua* immediacy structure types) categorization and 4-D graph plotting were conducted independent from one another. Once all concept maps were plotted on the corresponding 4-D graphs they were labeled according to the previously determined map types (explained below). Each 4-D graph and its corresponding concept maps were then examined to further verify consistency of map categorization across all cases. This step ensured that the characteristics and processes of a given map type matched how the map was geometrically situated in relation to structure, agency, interaction, and elaboration. For example, maps which were categorized together on the basis of frequent use of agency should also be plotted high on the agency dimension of the 4-D graph. Thus, the four dimensions were used to corroborate the initial map types identified.

The first step in identifying connections between map types and 4-D graphs was to post the 4-D graphs on office walls to allow visual observations of patterns in how agency, interaction, structure, and elaboration were situated. However, to identify ways that the 4-D graphs and map types were interrelated—and patterns in those connections—required analyses from multiple vantage points. While the 4-D graphs and concept maps illustrate the simultaneous interplay between the various components in practice (i.e., as experienced and disclosed by participants), the

interpretation thereof required an analytical approach which allowed for temporary interruption of the simultaneity and separation of the various components at play.

As a method that prescribes a process of alternating the researcher's focus from (i.e., disregarding) one aspect of interpretation to another (and vice versa) in order to capture the interplay between social interaction's various components, analytic bracketing (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000) became the basis for procedures used in identifying patterns in connections between map types and 4-D graphs. Gubrium and Holstein (2000) compare analytical bracketing to the process of shifting gears on a manual transmission. The analyst (driver) must understand that each time the analytical orientation (gear) changes the usefulness of the new focus is temporary. Thus, the analyst should anticipate subsequent change in orientation, while maintaining a willingness to suspend interpretative conclusions. Meanwhile, as in gear shifting, the move from one temporary analytical orientation to another cannot rely on pre-specified timing. Rather, it is an artistic process requiring sensitivity to the exhaustion of a particular analytical mode. Similarly, maintaining efficiency and productivity in the gear shifting process requires the driver to feel and be sensitive to indicators which signify that present demands exceed the gear's abilities. Just as in driving, analytical bracketing—with its demand for sensitivity and flexibility—requires that changes be principled and predetermined and not arbitrary or undisciplined.

In accordance with the principles of analytical bracketing, the 4-D graphs were reviewed by first focusing on a specific aspect of the data while temporarily

disregarding (i.e., putting on hold) other aspects. To enable limiting the focus on a specific aspect of the data, such as agency, the 4-D graphs were organized according to the levels of agency (i.e., high, moderately high, moderate, moderately low, low) prior to analysis. In this way visual observations could yield patterns which were specific to each level of agency.

Once it became apparent that no new interpretation could be derived from continued analysis of a particular aspect (e.g., agency) of the data, the focus was shifted to another specific aspect (e.g., interaction). As the focus shifted to a new aspect of the data, 4-D graphs were reorganized on the wall accordingly. This process was repeated over a period of four weeks until the four dimensions (i.e., agency, interaction, structure, and elaboration), various map types (i.e., rigid, response no agency, response agency, symbolic interaction, collectivity grounded, structural engagement), various demographic categories (e.g., age, education, geographic location, profession, sex), and the complex interrelationships between them had been considered in depth. The outcomes from bracketed analysis of each vantage point were identified and labeled for subsequent synthesis.

Validity

This study sought to comply with Lincoln and Guba's (2000) conceptualization of validity as comprising *authenticity*, *resistance*, and an *ethical relationship*. First, *authenticity* is the purposeful effort to ensure fair, accurate, and balanced inclusion and representation of all voices. Second, *resistance* requires constant interrupting and problematizing status quo positivist presumptions about

what should be considered truth. Third, developing *an ethical relationship* is a process of recognizing interconnectedness between *how* we know, *what* we know, the relationship with participants *from whom we know*—and to understand how the interpersonal and the epistemological intersect with the ethical.

Authenticity and resistance were achieved through the visual representation and repetitive analysis of concept maps and 4-D graphs. Further effort was made to ensure authenticity and resistance by coupling the interpretive method and analytic bracketing. These analytical procedures demanded that I constantly challenged my tentative interpretations until representative illustrations of this particular sample of participants' experiences appeared to be exhaustive, authentic, and indicative of resistance.

To further ensure validity, and maintain an ethical relationship with participants (Lincoln & Guba, 2000), member checking (Creswell, 1994) and feedback from informants were used. Early in the interviewing process two female participants, a male participant, and a few church members (i.e., a relief society president, a primary president, 2 Bishops) who met criteria for inclusion in the study but were not participants became informants. Informal, and occasionally more formal, independent dialogue with each of these informants was maintained throughout the data collection and interpretation stages of the study. These conversations provided the opportunity to confirm my interpretations of participants' intentions to ensure authentic voice. Conversations with the Relief Society President and Bishops were particularly useful in that their personal experiences—and their observations of other

church members they may have counseled in the capacity of their church positions— corroborated and challenged some of my preliminary interpretations. Participants' identities were not revealed during this process of receiving informant feedback.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

This study proposes and examines the model of Transactional Immediacy Structures. Specifically, critical incident technique interviews generated narratives of married LDS church members' perceptions of gender roles. These narratives were used to determine the presence and nature of relevant immediacy structures. Concept mapping was used as a tool for portraying multiple aspects of these narratives. Four dimensions—structure, agency, interaction, structural elaboration—emerging from the data were subsequently plotted on 4-D graphs. The interpretive model and analytical bracketing were used to examine patterns among concept maps and 4-D graphs. These analyses of narrative data provide answers to four research questions. These questions focus on communication and its role relevant to the nature of immediacy structure types and their use of rules and resources; their dynamic relationships with agency, structure, interaction, and elaboration; and how these structures constrain and enable action.

RQ1: On the basis of LDS church members' reports of their perceptions of gender roles, what types of immediacy structures exist among members of the LDS church?

RQ2: What rules and resources do LDS church members draw upon in the creation of immediacy structures regarding their perceptions of gender role(s)?

RQ3: On the basis of LDS church members' reports of their perceptions of gender roles, what are the roles and nature of agency, structure, interaction, and structural elaboration in immediacy structures used by members of the LDS church?

RQ4: How do structures constrain and enable the creation and enactment of LDS church members' immediacy structures regarding their perceptions of gender role(s)?

Types of Immediacy Structures

In the theoretical analysis in chapter 1, a typology of structures was proposed. The levels of structures included societal, interorganizational, organizational, group, familial, interpersonal, and immediate (*qua* immediacy structures). This study is focused on discovering more particularly what types of immediacy structures (IMSTs) exist and describing their characteristics. From this theoretical proposition comes the first research question:

RQ1: On the basis of LDS church members' reports of their perceptions of gender roles what types of immediacy structures exist among members of the LDS church?

Six types of immediacy structures—*rigid*, *response no agency*, *response agency*, *collectivity grounded*, *symbolic interaction*, and *structural engagement*—emerged from concept map analysis and were subsequently corroborated with analysis of the 4-D graphs. There were no observable sex differences in the types of IMST structures used.

Rigid IMSTs

Rigid IMSTs are characterized by strict adherence to status quo attitudes and behaviors grounded in assumptions derived primarily from properties of familial structures. Attitudes and behaviors are shaped by perceptions of how things have always been. The focus is not grounded in the accuracy, quality, or value of these attitudes and behaviors. The key is they are anchored in a rigidity characterized by staying the course without consideration for influence from other individuals, society, or the church (*qua* organizational structure). *Rigid IMSTs* also demonstrate less concern for interaction with others, personal reflection, or individual agency.

Heather is an example of the closed nature of *rigid IMSTs* because she focuses on maintaining her family's status quo attitudes and behaviors regarding the role of the woman in supporting, at all costs, the man's role as decision maker. Heather unequivocally describes the role she expects of her husband as a decision maker with comments such as: "I expect him to be the decision maker," "when I put him in the position to be the leader then I want him to say it," and "I just look to him to be the guide—the end decision maker." These expectations are accompanied by a clear statement of her own role.

If it is something good, even if I don't understand, my husband's the one that should make that decision. I should support him if it's something that I don't necessarily agree with but it's still good [pause] then I wouldn't fight him.

Her explanation of why she should support his decisions revolves around her mother's behaviors. In this case, the father's decisions were "supported" at great

personal cost for the mother. Heather explains that despite her mother's brain aneurysm, which was attributed to her stress over the outcomes of the father's decisions, "mother didn't fight him." Heather demonstrates the rigid maintenance of familial structures as she reveres and follows her mother's example with no apparent awareness or concern for agency, interaction with others, or any other influence beyond the family structure: "watching our mom, she will always follow him in every decision that he makes."

The sources Ron uses to explain his understanding of the man's role in the home show how *rigid* IMSTs have little variance from the status quo of familial structures. He explains "as head of household I have responsibility and stewardship for this family. Ultimately I am responsible for this family." He further asserts that "some decisions that are hard to make rest on my shoulders." The rationale for this role involves no discussion of agency or interactions with other individuals. Ron does not appear to take into consideration other sources of information or interpretations of presumed rules beyond family role-models:

I just learned it growing up I guess. I mean that's what my dad did. That's what my grandparents did. . . . That's just what I was taught. That's just how they led their lives I don't know what kind of specific examples you would—my mother my grandmothers they stayed home and raised their kids and were there for them.

Rachel is another example of the straightforward matter-of-fact approach common in the *rigid* IMST type's rationale for performing traditional roles. Her

justification of staying at home with her children is less like a decision and more like blind continuation of expectations grounded in structural properties. She demonstrates this with comments such as: “It’s just what we did. I’m old enough that that’s what we did,” “at that time that’s what mothers did,” and “that was back in the early 60’s and that was what we did.”

Response IMST Types

Both *response no agency* (RNAG) and *response agency* (RAG) IMST types illustrate how individuals respond when forced to confront sudden life interruptions such as serious illness, disability, job loss, job transfer, or other disruptions in the flow of their life experiences. Other conditions to which individuals may unexpectedly need to respond include contradictions between their assumptions about how others—especially spouses—should behave and the actual attitudes and behaviors of such specified individuals. While both RNAG and RAG IMSTs respond to life interruptions, they demonstrate different ways of responding to their interruptions. The RNAG IMST type is focused on the perceived loss of agency due to the interruption. Meanwhile, the RAG IMST type focuses on the maintaining of agency.

Rachel’s response to her husband’s deviation from her expectations is an illustration of the RNAG IMST type. Rachel describes how over the course of their 40 years of marriage her husband has not complied with her expectations “that he should be a leader in the family, that he should be the one that saw to it that the family had family home evening. He should see that the family had regular prayer

that the family had regular scripture study.” The husband’s deviation from her expectations invites a response. Rachel responds in a manner which assigns blame to him and demonstrates a lack of perceived agency on her part. She further rationalizes not taking the initiative for family home evening on the basis that doing so is *his* responsibility. “I thought he’s the priesthood holder—he’s the one whose suppose to be doing this.” She characterizes the unfulfilled desire for specific leadership outcomes (e.g., leading family home evening, prayer, scripture study) as beyond her control and frames it as something he has done to her. “I’ve told him I feel like he is denying me blessings as well as himself because he doesn’t do those things.” She further underscores the absence of agency in her response to his failure to perform these roles: “To me it’s important that we should’ve been having our home evenings and all those things. Those are things that are hurtful to me that we don’t do.”

Cindy also demonstrates how someone else’s choices can create conditions to which the individual must respond. In this case, she was working with a group of young women trying to get them involved in the planning of an activity. The interruption to which she would need to respond was created when, as she says, “the Bishop came and changed everything.” The frustration and perception that her efforts were not appreciated led to responding with what she calls “the ‘what does the bishop want us to do’ kinda thing.” The Bishop’s behaviors elicited a response which ultimately was that “next time we planned an activity I didn’t put as much work into it.”

The nature of interruptions to which individuals respond varies greatly across cases in a number of ways. Specifically interruptions may (a) be positive or negative, (b) have positive or negative outcomes, or (c) have greater or lesser magnitude (i.e., some have more permanent consequences). The RNAG and RAG IMSTs are similar in that both emerge in response to some interruption. The more important delineating point is found not in the type of interruption but in how much the constraints of the incident are used to amplify one's perception and claims of how much agency is lost or maintained.

The RNAG IMST can be summed up as an attitude of "because of X, I had no choice but to do Y," or to use scriptural language familiar to this sample: "to be acted upon" (2 Nephi 2:26). In other words the individual perceives a lack of agency and carries on as if in survival mode. The problem or issue (*qua* interruption) becomes an impetus for not doing what one might otherwise want to do. As the conditions are perceived to be beyond the participant's control, the incident precludes consideration of options.

Contrasting the RNAG hopelessness, the RAG IMST reflects an attitude of "because of X, I chose Y," or as described in LDS scriptural language: "to act for themselves" (2 Nephi 2:26). In other words, RNAG IMSTs suggest being acted upon by X while RAG IMSTs suggest acting upon X. For RAG IMSTs, the conditions of an interruption are unexpected but the outcomes are perceived of as falling within the realm of something the individual can act upon. Thus, the interruption becomes an impetus for doing what one might not have otherwise thought to do. As responses to

the outcomes are perceived to be within the participant's control, the incident causes awareness and consideration of options.

While certain aspects of the response process differ between the RNAG and RAG IMST types, there are some important similarities in these IMST types. Sean (uses a RNAG IMST) and Marvin (uses a RAG IMST) respond to similar life altering experiences in ways that show how the magnitude of interruptions and the demands of the responses' outcomes can be similar although the specific processes (*qua* IMSTs) differ. Specifically, both men sustained life threatening workplace injuries which rendered them disabled and unable to remain bona fide employees in their professions. Sean is now a stay at home dad who cares for the children, manages the household needs, and homeschools his children. Meanwhile, after his accident Marvin earned a college degree and now operates his own construction business. The outcomes of Sean and Marvin's responses to their conditions are drastically different but equally demanding. The differences in IMSTs in these cases are grounded in how they perceived the loss or maintenance of agency, not in different outcomes or specific behaviors. Sean argues that the situation left him without choices "it's not a choice for me to go out and work." Meanwhile, Marvin argues that the situation presented him with new choices and opportunities. "I would never leave my economic destiny in the hands of somebody else. If I was ever going to make it, it would be because of my own efforts."

Malinda's responses to abuses of power further demonstrate an IMST that maintains perceived agency and consideration of alternatives. Malinda reports her

experiences of overcoming sexual abuse as a child, observing cases of such abuse as an adult, and ultimately making it her life's mission to save children from various forms of abuse. In this way she illustrates how one can perceive the maintenance of agency. The interruption and continued perception of agency lead her to act in ways that she may not have considered otherwise. Specifically, "I'm proud that I survived it. . . . And I know that I can be a help to others." The help she provides others is to become a foster parent to many and adopt two children who: "come with such horrific religious baggage. I can't begin to tell you the abuse under the guise of religion." In other words, she has chosen to respond to horrendous experiences and observations in ways that rescue children from abusive environments. Instead of characterizing herself as a victim, doing nothing and claiming to have no agency, she responds as if she has control of her choices and engages in altruistic actions.

Another illustration of the RAG IMST type is Mike's description of what it was like for him to be single until he was nearly 40 in a church culture where most men are married before they turn 30. He explains how he did not set out to delay marriage and that his difficulty in finding a spouse was accompanied by many dreadful blind dates, "jokes" from leaders and friends, and constant pressure to get married. A critical point for Mike was when he was told that he could not serve as a temple worker because he was single and over 30. These factors combined were particularly difficult as he was not purposefully delaying marriage. As he says, "it wasn't for a lack of me not getting out there and dating people that's for sure." Despite these difficulties, Mike acknowledges his own agency over the years: "It was

still in my control—no doubt. I could’ve tried online, moved out west. . . . So it was completely in my control but I hold on to that it wasn’t as if I wasn’t dating.”

Interaction IMST Types

The next two IMST types are primarily grounded in the influences and outcomes of interaction. Both the *collectivity grounded* (COLL) and *symbolic interaction* (SIA) IMST types point to the roles of messages, interactions, and perceptions. Hence, the major common characteristic between COLL and SIA IMST types is the influence of communication. The specific messages (sent and received), interactions with others, observations, perceived importance and accuracy of others’ views, interpretations, attitudes, and behaviors are all central to the creation and justification of the IMST and its enactment. What separates COLL from SIA IMSTs is the variance in specificity (i.e., a vague sense of “they” vs. references to specific people and specific messages). COLL IMSTs are influenced primarily by a more general view of those individuals or systems observed by the participant. In other words the emphasis is on observations of the collective “they” and generic “the church,” or “society.” COLL IMSTs are more general and abstract than SIA.

Collectivity Grounded IMSTs

Randy illustrates the function of general observations characteristic of the COLL IMST type. He describes how, as a new convert, observations of men in the LDS Church challenged his assumptions about connections between professional attire, spirituality, and leadership abilities. Randy’s narrative points to the key role that perceptions of the collectivity played in changing his attitudes. Referencing his

first Stake Priesthood Leadership meeting, Randy says “Some of them were farmers. Some of them weren’t dressed in suits. Some of them just didn’t look dressed the best. I always figured leadership people were clean cut and dressed nice. . . . I closed my eyes and listened to them talk. I realized the spirituality they had. If they had a pair of overalls on or had grease underneath their fingernails it was not relevant. I realized the spirituality of a man is more important than being able to express yourself well or making a good appearance.” Thus, Randy’s understanding of the role to be “spiritual” was shaped by his perceptions of the collectivity.

Rachel shows how not having examples leads to reliance on one’s perceptions of the collectivity.

People all come from they come from all kinds of different places [pause] different circumstances. I didn’t come from a circumstance where I had any examples. I had *no* examples [pause] in my childhood none at all. [pause] I had to learn all of this. I looked around a lot. I watched others [pause] to see. I watched what they did.

Perceptions of the collectivity are central to the process Rachel uses to generate an understanding of her roles. “I took a little bit from one and a little bit from another. There were certain things I really liked in one person and another thing I liked in another person. Things that I tried to develop in myself. I’m a composite! Or I became a composite! [laughter]”

Carl also uses the COLL IMST type as he points to both his family role models and general observations of church and societal examples as the basis for his

desire to engage in behaviors that he perceives to have contributed to others' happiness. He describes his attitudes as "a mixture of the traditional things I saw growing up versus the women's liberation movement in the 70s." Carl also references observing others and deciding to do what they did because "it seemed like the right thing to do. They seemed happy doing that." Ultimately, observations of the collectivity influenced Carl's behaviors. "I don't remember any awakening to this but it was a gradual realization over time that I really could get off my rear and help do things."

Symbolic Interaction IMSTs

Symbolic interaction (SIA) IMSTs are characterized primarily by references to specific interactions and specific symbols. Specified conversation is referenced as the type of interaction that influences the IMST. Various levels of structures may be important sources to observe in COLL IMSTs, but they are not the primary forces for SIA IMSTs. Individual relationships and the specific framing of symbols and metaphors are the primary forces for change and continuity in the SIA IMST.

Debbie shows the influence of specific conversations, symbols, and framing as factors contributing to her understanding and enactment of specific roles. While performing what she understood to be her responsibilities as Relief Society president, her bishop tells her that some men find her intimidating. "Every once in a while he would tell me to calm down a little. I did; depending on how they did. [laughter]" Debbie also frames the nature of her communication with male leaders in a number of ways: "When I'm given a calling from the Lord—he did not expect me to have a

calling in name only and just look cute and bring treats;” “I respect the positions but they’re still men and they still make mistakes;” and “that’s *their* problem [emphasis hers].”

Pauline’s narrative further reflects the role of framing in SIA IMSTs. She describes the difficulties associated with role conflict between wanting to be involved in her profession but believing she should be at home with her children. She also acknowledges how she (unlike others) had the financial liberty to decide whether to work outside the home or not. Her ability to choose was underscored by her husband’s willingness to be the one to stay at home. Ultimately her decision to work part time and focus primarily on responsibilities as a stay at home mother was influenced by a series of specific interactions with a friend, who persistently framed three key aspects of the motherhood role. First, the contrast between instant gratification received at work and the practical burdens of rearing children. Second, that it was her choice to be or not be part of her children’s growth. Third, that being with children was fun. Each of these points were framed by her friend in the context of specific interactions in such a way that the friend’s framing of the role helped her see the role in a more positive light.

I have one friend who um worked full time and um she was very unhappy to work full time. So I would tell her that maybe not work so much. Which I have to say. There’s kinda a disclaimer here because I have choice financially speaking I have a choice. Whereas a lot of people there’s not a lot of choice they have to work or they choose that they have to work. I am lucky enough

that I really want to use my degree and I can work but I don't have to go to work. She said "well I don't know why you just don't stay home if you don't have to financially work." I described how I love to go to work. . . . I like the social interactions. It's very satisfying and fulfilling. Whereas when you come home and you're working and trying to do both the house is a mess the kids are a little wild. You don't feel that great I'm doing a great job. [laughter] There's that instant gratification you get when you have a good conversation with a client and you feel like you're helping them. They go away and you have a good feeling. With children there's lots of discipline lots of diapers things that are very unfun. Not that there aren't fun things but a lot times you don't get that instant gratification that you get with work—that I get with work. I remember she said um many times she said that instant gratification is hard to get over [pause] but it's not that the instant gratification that it's about it's the eternal reward. It's the you know that your children are growing up they're never going to be going to kindergarten again they're never going to be doing those things again and you're missing it. You're *choosing* to miss it. She said "I wish that I had a choice. I wish that I was able to spend that time with my kids." Ironically a little bit later she was able to quit her job and spend about six months at home with her kids. She would call me and she would say we went to the park today and it was so fun. She made it seem very um *great* to be at home with her children. She was very excited about it. And I had always seen it as a drudgery.

The influence of specific interactions and external framing experienced by Pauline is highly illustrative of the SIA IMST type. Pauline continues to draw upon her friend's framing to justify performance of the stay at home mom role.

It was very difficult for me not so much to stop working as it was for me to become active in my children's lives. It is difficult to sit down and spend time with them because it's not that instant gratification. I have to think back to her saying "wasn't that great" and "we had so much fun it was great."

Another example of how the SIA IMST type points to the influence of specific interactions is Tim's claim that a 90 second conversation with his father changed his entire outlook on marriage and his role as a spouse. His dad told him "if you want your marriage to be like everyone else's in the world then you go off and have a 50-50 marriage. But if you want to have the perfect marriage it's 100-zero. You give everything and don't expect anything in return." Tim's change in attitude about how to approach marital needs and the specific subsequent rules are not so much what makes this an SIA IMST as much as the emphasis he places on the specific conversation's role in shaping his attitudes and behaviors.

That little 90 second tidbit of wisdom from dad has really for me it's made me as a husband. That one little tidbit of wisdom has as a husband and as far as our marital relationship is concerned that one little tidbit of wisdom has probably affected me more than anything else—directly and profoundly.

Structural Engagement IMST

The primary characteristic of the *structural engagement* (STENG) IMST is the purposeful appropriation of structural rules, resources, and interactions for specific objectives which may include meeting either personal needs or satisfying altruistic demands.

One example of the STENG IMST is Cindy's purposeful use of structural properties in her framing of a paradox in the tension between two rules: *be self-reliant* and *mom stay at home*. "I'm not going on welfare just so I can stay home and have 15 kids." Framing contradictory rules in this way remained a resource for explaining and maintaining her performance of the provider role despite family pressures to stay at home and fulfill the homemaker role. Cindy engaged the organizational structure, specifically the rule to be self-reliant, as rationale for not complying with the family's pressures and the perceived organizational rule to stay at home. Specifically, she says "In the church we're taught that we need to become self-reliant. To me that means you should be able to take care of yourself and your family and you shouldn't rely on others." As a stay at home mom she remains proud that, until her husband could provide for the family, she continued to work—even though, as she says, "it was a sacrifice." The personal sacrifice of not staying home with her children was secondary to engaging the structure's self-reliance rule: "I believe in taking care of yourself and I'm not going to live off someone else."

Dan's narrative is about his appreciation of women with whom he has served in various church callings and his concern about the degree to which women are

listened to in local church councils. “Sometimes they feel like they get bull-dozed over—and in fact they do.” As a former Stake President and current stake presidency counselor, Dan employs the STENG IMST type to address and resolve these concerns. He outlines specific procedures he uses to (a) solicit information about how well women are being listened to, (b) encourage and instruct men to listen to women, (c) instruct women how to be more assertive, and (d) respond to men who resist instructions and invitations to change.

Throughout the narrative specific interactions appear to be prevalent as an aspect of Dan’s procedures. In this case, specific interaction is not a basis (*qua* rule) for his IMST but it is a tool or mechanism (*qua* resource) used to facilitate structural engagement. In other words his decisions, attitudes, and behaviors, are not grounded in the interactions with other agents, as would be the case with *symbolic interaction* and *collectivity grounded* IMSTs. His decisions, attitudes, and behaviors precede the interactions. Thus, interaction becomes part of the structural engagement. Specific structural properties (e.g., scriptural references, authority of his official position, responsibilities of others’ official positions, stories about historical figures such as Joseph Smith) constitute his scripts for addressing the overall concern for encouraging men to listen to and value women in their church callings.

Christine’s IMST illustrates engaging the structure when facing problems within the organization. Specifically, she was willing to follow the Bishop’s direction in her calling as Primary President but she was also willing to confront him when his decisions contradicted the policies in the church handbook of instructions. The role of

agency is manifested as she specifically accepts the subordinate position of her role in the Primary President-Bishop relationship. “I didn’t have a problem being told what to do or how it’s done.” Agency is further manifested as she insists “I don’t have a problem not complying.” Therefore, when the situation arose when the Bishop introduced decisions that were inconsistent with her interpretation of church policy, she engaged the structure by appealing to her handbook of instructions. After consulting the handbook, she told the Bishop what he wanted to do was not a good idea. Ultimately structural engagement led to a satisfying solution of the problem “going to the handbook it resolved itself.”

Summary of IMST Types

Six types of IMSTs emerged from the concept map analyses. First, *rigid* IMSTs characterize their roles in straightforward, a matter-of-fact manner and demonstrate strict adherence to status quo influences from organizational, cultural—and particularly familial—structures.

Next, are two types of *response* IMSTs—which demonstrate competing processes of responding to various unexpected life interruptions. *Response no agency* (RNAG) IMSTs are those in which interruptions are perceived by participants as creating outcomes beyond their control. Individuals who use RNAG IMSTs perceive themselves as having lost some degree of agency, which renders them unable to act upon the situation. Participants who use RNAG IMSTs also demonstrate a negative egocentric view of the interruptions’ aftermath (i.e., a general view that someone has wronged them). Contrasting the RNAG IMST is the second type of *response* IMSTs:

response agency (RAG). Individuals who use RAG IMSTs find opportunities to act and perceive the interruption as an opportunity to exercise increased agency—generally in altruistic ways.

The fourth and fifth IMST types are directly related to interactions and the influence of communication upon the individual's perceptions and behavioral decisions. *Collectivity grounded* (COLL) IMSTs are those in which individuals characterize vague and general observations of others and collectivities as major influences in the development of their own attitudes and actions. Related to COLL IMSTs are the *symbolic interaction* (SIA) IMSTs. SIA IMST narratives also focus on the influence of communication with others upon their own attitudes and actions. However, while the COLL IMSTs focus on the collectivity, SIA IMSTs focus on much more specific interactions, messages, symbols, and frames as sources that shape the IMST.

The sixth IMST—*structural engagement* (STENG)—is characterized primarily by the use of structures and structural properties as tools (i.e., resources) for accomplishing one's own desires. The use of structure in this way does not always parallel intended structural outcomes—but they often do. STENG IMST narratives illustrate the salience of interaction, framing, and especially agency as structural properties to be implemented as tools.

Related to observing the different types of IMSTs is discovering how rules and resources are used similarly and differently across the six IMST types. This is the focus of the second research question.

Role of Rules and Resources

Rules and resources can be difficult to observe and separate because they have a dynamic, intertwined nature. They are mutually and simultaneously constitutive and reconstitutive. For the purpose of analysis we can bracket this simultaneous relationship and conceptualize a resource as the source for a rule but as such it is also the rule. Subsequently, the rule can then become a resource. In addition to their ability to transform into resources, rules are specific ideas and concepts governing behaviors and attitudes. As resources, rules also are used to interpret the behaviors and attitudes of other individuals and collectivities. Resources may also be actual physical resources, such as materials or finances. Other resources for this sample include knowledge of rules, access to historical and scriptural documents, availability of supplemental reading materials, and attendance at various leadership meetings where instructions and clarifications on church policies and doctrines are conveyed (i.e., many members who do not hold leadership positions are not invited to attend such meetings and therefore have less direct access to specialized training). Additional resources would be symbols and an understanding of how they are used within the particular structural context (i.e., system). Therefore, the second research question seeks to uncover and specify the various rules and resources that contribute to an IMST.

RQ2: What rules and resources do LDS church members draw upon in the creation of immediacy structures regarding their perceptions of gender role(s)?

Rules and Resources in Rigid IMSTs

Although there are fewer resources used among *rigid* IMSTs than in the other IMST types, *rigid* IMSTs maintain a heightened emphasis on specific rules. Those who are most rigid reference specific resources for their rules the least—yet are very focused on the rules they see as most important. In other words, the quantity of rules and resources found among RIGID IMSTs is limited, but the focus on those few rules is heightened greatly—thus their influence on the individual is significant. There is a particularly heavy focus on family, especially parents' and grandparents' behaviors. Participants using *rigid* IMSTs pride themselves in being tightly connected to strict compliance with expectations grounded in the status quo of familial structures. Additionally, there is not much variance within cases in the interpretation and appropriation of specific rules and resources. *Rigid* IMSTs do not demonstrate concern about personal options or others' opinions. Other structural influences may be imposed but they are more likely to be subsumed by efforts to maintain the status quo attitudes and behaviors.

Rigid IMSTs also have specific conceptualizations of rules for the roles of men and women. *Rigid* IMSTs hold that women should: *support, take care of home, respect husband, stay at home, don't fight, and encourage husband*. Meanwhile, the man's roles are to *provide, preside, be responsible, teach, lead, and not control*. What is most common is not the particular roles but the practice of fixed role-delineation. The resource is *rigid role delineation* while the rule is that there should be *no*

variation from rigid role delineation. Thus, *rigid role delineation* is both resource and rule simultaneously.

Resources for rules in *rigid* IMSTs include general ambiguous references to “the scriptures,” family examples (especially parents and grandparents), observations of local church leaders, and the church’s 1995 proclamation on the family (*The Family: A Proclamation to the World*; see Appendix B). A few symbols also emerge as resources for *rigid* IMST explanations of men’s and women’s roles. Symbols of the males’ role are *Family Home Evening*, *leader*, *righteous*, *responsible*, *stewardship*. Symbols of the females’ role are *support* and *agree*.

Connections between resources and rules are very straightforward, consistent with the nature of the *rigid* IMST type. Lloyd is typical in the expression of his role as the resource “the examples have been set” is tightly connected to the rule “I am the provider.” Allyson points to another tightly connected rule-resource relationship pertaining to the woman’s role to support (*qua* resource) and the explanation of its meaning (*qua* rule): “It means to keep your mouth shut and not argue with your husband.”

Justin characterizes family home evening as an indicator of his success in fulfilling his role as the priesthood leader in the home. “A man should be the spiritual leader in the home and hold family home evening.” He holds his father’s example (*qua* resource) of holding 2-hour long family home evening lessons as the benchmark (*qua* rule) for his own success. However, in his own family this standard appears unattainable “I have a hard time getting her [his wife] to sit still for a 10-minute

lesson.” This rigid portrayal of what the father should do contrasted by the lack of “support” received from his spouse becomes a resource for attributing his perceived failure to her resistance “it’s been a real battle almost every single time.” The *lack of support* resource generates rules which further point to the IMST’s strict adherence to status quo familial structures. We see this process as Justin continues to return to the rule that the wife should comply with his desire to have family home evening: “If a husband would like to have family home evening she should support the effort by attending—turning off the t.v.” This case illustrates an inability or unwillingness to be flexible in the appropriation of rules and resources. For Justin there is a clear set of rules stating that (a) his success as a man in the home is measured by the holding of family home evening, (b) she should support him in this endeavor, (c) his blame for his failure is grounded in her lack of support, and (d) failure remains his (i.e., not hers). This narrow view of which rules and resources are important and how they should be appropriated to maintain status quo attitudes and behaviors is common among *rigid* IMSTs.

Rules and Resources in Response No Agency IMSTs

Individuals using *response no agency* (RNAG) IMSTs describe the hopeless condition of a relationship or system within which they perceive themselves to have been wronged by someone else, often a spouse. Multiple resources are used to judge others and amplify perceptions of lost agency and victimization. The few rules that appear among RNAG IMSTs are appropriated to justify judgments of others, especially spouses, who do not comply with expectations. Although they do not

specify organizational rules that say “he should do x” or “she cannot do x,” RNAGs respond to *interruptions* by maintaining *rigid role delineation*. Specifically a husband’s failure to perform the role (i.e., follow the rule)—that he should hold family home evening—becomes the resource for justifying the martyr role taken on by the wife. *Family Home Evening* and the role of the male as priesthood holder are significant resources for females using the RNAG IMST. These women have several resources for expressing their disappointment, but they lack specific organizational rules in their expression of the need to be rigid in the demarcation of familial rules about family home evenings and their position as agents in the family system.

For example, Rachel focuses on her lack of agency and how she has been wronged by her husband’s failure to hold family home evening. She references several resources for why the family should have family home evening (classes, prophets, conferences) but never provides a resource for the rule that *he* should be responsible. Nonetheless, this is the rule she uses (*qua* resource) to judge his performance of priesthood leadership in the home. The rule (have Family Home Evening) and resource (i.e., the rule appropriated as a standard for judgment of his performance) become justification for the martyr role she takes on (*qua* rule).

Sherry’s experience shows how an idealistic view of the prototype husband sets up conditions for the RNAG IMST type. She references a film strip “Together Forever,” that she watched as a child, and the examples of her grandparents as sources for her view of the ideal husband. Of the filmstrip she says:

The dad was the father and he you know went out and worked. You saw him in small excerpts [begins crying; voice begins to break up while speaking] but you could still tell he was the leader of the home. I don't know how I just [pause] you could tell you know. [pause] I remember thinking back [sniffles] about that kind of home. I love that kind of marriage. I want the father to be in charge. I want to be able to stay home and raise my kids to the gospel standards and do all things I'm suppose to do.

However, Sherry's husband's failure to perform her "ideal" creates for her a situation demanding a response. Her frustration and hopelessness are indicative of a response which amplifies the absence of agency on the matter. Thus she acknowledges contradictions between her ideal and her perceptions of the reality: "When I got engaged to him I thought he had more potential than he does [sigh] I don't know [sigh] I think I thought I was marrying all that." Although, after 11 years of marriage, she expresses frustration she maintains "I want my husband to take a larger role in being in charge of our home." In this case two contradicting resources (the ideal husband rule and perceptions of current reality) contribute to the creation of the rule that the husband should take a larger role. Implied herein is also the rule that certain roles, which Sherry has perceived and prescribed to be the husband's, are beyond the scope of what she can act upon as the wife. In other words, she responds to her perceptions of his inability to perform a role as if he has let her down and as if she cannot do anything about it. When asked if she had discussed this with him, she began sobbing and indicated that she had not. Hence, this RNAG IMST operates

under the rule “I know what I’ve been taught in my lessons at church what the man’s role is. I, however, don’t see that in my life growing up or even in my marriage now. I don’t see that much.”

Sarah shows a similar RNAG IMST pattern of disappointment followed by amplification of victimization and perceived loss of agency. She simultaneously refutes and confirms her mother’s assertion that “men are weak” as she describes her ongoing 27 year struggle to get her husband to help “take charge and get the kids to church.” She refutes the idea that men are weak by pointing to the specific rule (i.e., her perception of the ideal) that her husband should be strong. In reference to the men are weak proposition, she says “I think that’s a bunch of bull.” Yet she confirms the hopelessness of her reality as she describes that her husband is not as strong as herself and that efforts to get him to “take charge” are like “pulling teeth.” Thus, she illustrates the frustration typical of RNAG IMSTs.

Rules and Resources in Response Agency IMSTs

The role of rules and resources in *response agency* (RAG) IMSTs contrast that of RNAGs. Among RNAG IMSTs multiple resources are transformed into rules appropriated to justify judgments and amplify perceptions of lost agency. RAG IMSTs, however, take a rule or two and draw upon multiple resources to accomplish the demands of a situation. The focus is more on resources as tools for responding than on rules for assessing compliance. The effort to seek and use resources appropriate for the situations—coupled with the RAGs willingness to set aside personal interests and preconceived notions about what is right and wrong—yields

rules that benefit others. Thus, the overarching rules are to be *flexible* and *altruistic* in responding to life's interruptions.

Because RAG IMSTs draw upon a wide variety of resources, there are several resources that did not emerge as thematic among RAG IMST maps. Specific resources that were, however, common among RAG IMST maps include: New Testament scriptural references, descriptions of Christ (giving of self, so-called effeminate words), Church General Authorities, and Spencer W. Kimball (Church President 1973-1985).

Also common is that *response agency* (RAG) IMSTs are more flexible and altruistic in the application of rules, even the same rules cited by both *rigid* and *response no agency* (RNAG) IMSTs. For example, the husband's roles of protector and provider are found in *rigid*, RNAG, and RAG IMSTs. Only among the RAG narratives do we see a willingness to be flexible and altruistic (i.e., helpful vs. judgmental) in the appropriation of these rules. What makes RAG different from *rigid* and RNAG IMSTs is not the specific rules of the structure used but how they are interpreted and appropriated. Hence, rule content is less important in distinguishing between these IMST types than the process of rule application.

There are no common rules for women's roles among RAGs, but parental examples and New Testament descriptions of Christ giving himself for others are often cited as rules regarding men's roles. For example, Justin responds to his wife's frustrations by appropriating specific New Testament scripture as a rule for his choices and behaviors. He and his wife had previously established some traditional

roles where he provided for the family financially and she was a homemaker (defined in this family as a stay at home mom). The interruption to which he would need to respond was her expression that “she felt it would be frustrating to spend the rest of her life doing housework.” Justin’s perception was that “she had a need to go to college” and that supporting her in that endeavor was part of his role. “The New Testament said husbands give yourselves for your wives as Christ gave himself for the church. I felt like by helping her go to college I was helping her to be happy.” This process of appropriating a spouse’s need and specific scriptural references as salient resources to create rules to satisfy the demands of a situation is consistent among RAG IMSTs.

Malinda also references scriptural descriptions of Christ as resources for specific rules. She discusses at length her perceptions of men abusing power in the church. She responds to her observations and experiences with the rule “we are just trying to raise our children differently.” Specifically, her efforts to train her sons—and her hope for how others would train their sons—are grounded in two sets of rules. Malinda summarizes the first of rules: “We try to empower them; just because you’re at the church you’re not necessarily safe. You’ve got your own *brain*! No! You stand on your own two feet.” Her second set of rules is:

You just keep *hoping* that the next generation of male is wiser and working towards truly being Savior like. . . . The virtues of the Savior some of the words that are used to describe Him oft times are effeminate words supposedly female words, terms you know caring, compassionate you know,

and oft times those are gender specific in our culture at least, and I think we're conscientious that those need to apply to our sons too.

Additionally, Malinda's narrative demonstrates how both the abuse (*qua* interruption) and the rescue (*qua* response) are connected to the structure. The abuse occurred under the guise of religious structures (i.e., in both LDS and non-LDS contexts). The effort to help or save others is also highly grounded in religious structure (i.e., "words that describe the Savior").

Justin and Malinda's responses reflect the rules *be flexible* and *be altruistic* which are common among all RAG IMSTs. Under this umbrella, three rules further specify how RAGs' respond to their interruptions. The first rule is, as Tim says, that one must respond: "Sometimes conditions require a response. We can't always anticipate these conditions." The second rule is that there must be personal accountability, as demonstrated by Marvin: "I would never leave my economic destiny in the hands of someone else." The third rule, as Rachel explains, is to place priority on the relationship: "Some things are important. Some are not. Loving one another is important. Some things just aren't that important."

Responses that focus on agency, individual accountability, and privileging the relationship define the relevancy and appropriation of resources in RAG IMSTs. The consistent point is not which organizational or familial rules and resources are used but that they are used to meet the altruistic demands of the situation. This contrasts the RNAG's appropriation of a situation to meet the demands of egocentric judgments.

Rules and Resources in Collectivity Grounded IMSTs

Resources most commonly referenced in *collectivity grounded* (COLL) IMST narratives include general observations of others, general impressions of church activities and lessons, family influences, and the lack of influence or instruction. Other specific resources frequently appearing among COLL IMSTs include the teachings and life example of David O. McKay (Church President 1951-1970), conference talks, and M. Russell Ballard's (Church General Authority 1976 to present) 1997 book *Counseling with our Councils: Learning to Minister in the Church and in the Family*.

COLL IMSTs use multiple resources to shape and generate rules. For example, Ballard's book and stories about McKay are resources in COLL IMSTs for the specific rule that men should listen to and respect women in the decision-making process. Thus, three rules—*observe others*, *fluid role delineation*, and *evaluate outcomes*—characterize COLL IMSTs.

Observe Others

Following this rule individuals look to others for instruction. Often they do so because they have no model to follow. The *lack of specific examples* (*qua* rules) to follow coupled with a *desire to know* (*qua* resource) leads to the purposeful observation of others. Hence, *observe others* becomes the rule.

One example of how *observe others* functions as both rule and resource is Shelly's efforts to compensate for the absence of positive role models. First, her childhood experiences and observations of adults—especially of an abusive and

alcoholic father—generated a certain set of assumptions (*qua* rules): “I didn’t really know any couple in my previous religion that I admired. I never planned on getting married because I didn’t know any happily married people.” Shelly explains that as a new member of the church: “I felt like I was behind. I felt like I didn’t know much about the church.” This sentiment was remedied, at least in part, by her observations of others. “I saw these couples were very in love with each other.” These observations reinforced the function of her observations as both rule and resource: “I wanted to know what they know so I could have it too.” Shelly also draws heavily upon the example of former church president David O. McKay as a resource to define the rules she enacts in her marriage. “I read a lot about him and his family and his relationship with his wife and his children and I only wanted to emulate him.”

After discussing her observations of others and the specific example of David O. McKay, Shelly describes a set of rules she claims to enact in her own marriage. Notice the parallels between her rule to *work it out because you love each other* and her observations of couples whom she perceived loved each other:

We probably aren’t the happiest people in the world but I think Jim and I are a good mesh together. We’ve been married 33 years. We haven’t had bliss since day one. We had to understand one another and mold for each other. When you’re LDS and you go into marriage with the idea *you’re going to work it out*. Now I’m not saying divorce is not an option. But I’m saying if *both of you* go into the marriage knowing that you will, you’re going to work it out! And to both of you’s satisfaction. You can work it out [pause] if you love each

other. The biggest thing if I can say anything is marry the person because you love them not because [pause]. And this is what I think this is what holds LDS people together. Jim and I did not have a sexual relationship. I didn't marry him because of sex. I married him because I loved him as a person we were *friends*. The sex was just icing on the cake. That was not our attraction to one another. I've seen a lot of divorces and people run and get married because well they're not really friends. They don't really love that person. They love their sexual relationship. And I think *that's what holds Latter-Day Saints together* because you don't have sex before you get married and so that's not what draws you to one another.

Gilbert also describes using the rule *observe others* and how general observations function as the resource of his understanding about the roles of men and women. He explains "I think it was just a culmination of observances as I was growing up." Gilbert's description of these observances included non-specific references to priesthood leaders, church youth activities and lessons, and friends. The only specifics Gilbert discusses are that he was raised in a family without a father and the general example of David O. McKay.

Another example of how the COLL IMST type uses the rule *observe others* is Rachel. She explains how there was an absence of examples in her life followed by a need to observe others and how ultimately she perceived some observations as providing salient rules:

I watched what they did. I took a little bit from one and a little bit from another. There were certain things that I really like in one person and another thing I liked in another person. I'm a composite! Or became a composite!

Fluid Role Delineation

Among *collectivity grounded* (COLL) IMSTs there are frequent references to some specific views on division of labor and differences in roles on the basis of sex. However, COLL IMSTs are not tightly connected to these rules for division of labor. The focus is more on task completion and not on who is assigned which role. As such, flexibility and acceptance of nontraditional roles are characteristic of COLL IMSTs. Hence, *fluid role delineation* is another rule emerging from the COLL IMST narratives.

Ryan, for example, is more concerned about being present as a father and allowing his wife to have choices than maintaining rigid roles. This focus is grounded in a desire to compensate for his own father's shortcomings. "I want to be there like my father wasn't there. . . . I want to be stronger and do what my father didn't do." He expresses a desire for his family to "be strong" and to engage in family prayer, family scripture study, and family home evenings. But, unlike other with more rigid expectations for role delineation, Ryan focuses on "being the best husband I can" and "working together." This narrative further illustrates how *fluid role delineation* pertains to the specific tasks of providing for the family and caring for children. Ryan expresses that he would enjoy staying home with his children but his enactment of the provider role is a result of his *wife's* choice to stay home. Although they enact

traditional homemaker and provider roles, there is an acceptance of the rule that these roles could be reversed. “I think they fall under the man and the wife. We can each be a provider and we can each be a homemaker.”

Fluid role delineation is also demonstrated by Carl’s concern about the treatment of women by some men in the context of church councils. Carl describes his frustration over his observations of men in the church who do not seem to respect or listen to women: “They ignore their council or sometimes even belittle them in sometimes direct ways. And I am absolutely flabbergasted.” The men whom Carl observed were rigid in their assumptions about the roles of women in local church administration.

There are a few individuals that I think they are living in the dark ages when it comes to how they regard women. . . . Some of these guys it’s obvious to me view women as being kinda weak and that their thoughts sometimes are frivolous.

Carl’s use of the *fluid role delineation* rule is manifested in his attitudes and treatment of women in the context of church leadership—despite the status quo behaviors of his peers. Instructions from various church leaders, particularly both Ballard’s 1997 book on using church councils as tools for ecclesiastical decision making and his conference talks about listening to women, were primary resources for the rules outlined and implemented by Carl. He explains how involving and listening to women came easy for him. “It seemed to come naturally for me to include women and try to treat them as equal in the decision-making process.” Specifically, as a

Bishop, Carl enacts the *fluid role* rule by considering and treating the Relief Society president as a counselor in the otherwise all male bishopric. Carl explains the relevancy he gives to these resources and his appropriation of related rules.

You know I've paid attention. I think Elder Ballard, in particular, has talked about making sure that women's voices are heard in the ward council and so on. And I always *really* made it a point to solicit input from the relief society president—and the other women leaders when we had our ward council. And I told the relief society presidents and I told the other people in the priesthood leadership that I regarded the relief president as essentially a counselor to me. Now obviously that's not church doctrine. But I think it does fit in with what Elder Ballard and other people have said.

Greg summarizes his view of the general relevancy and point of the *fluid role delineation* rule:

I think it's better that it's not clearly defined and that it's worked out in each particular family than saying as a girl you have to do this. Every individual needs the opportunity to develop as far as they can go. To the extent that a clearly defined standardized role inhibits you from doing some of the things you could otherwise do it detracts from the overall quality of life.

Evaluate Outcomes

The third rule found among COLL IMSTs is *evaluate outcomes*. Frequently the COLL IMSTs involve a process of observing the outcomes of other's behaviors, assessing the desirability of those outcomes, and then using those outcomes as

justification for one's own behaviors. In this way the evaluations of others becomes the general resource for specific rules which shape—or justify—attitudes and behaviors.

Sean uses the *evaluate outcomes* rule to simultaneously justify his performance of a nontraditional role (i.e., stay at home dad) and reject criticisms levied against his wife by other women who claim to be fulfilling roles designated by the church structure (i.e., stay at home moms). His observations of their failures to produce what he would deem to be satisfying outcomes function as both resource and rule used to judge their performance of the role. In this case it is not necessarily the *stay at home mom* rule which is rejected, but it is their appropriation of the rule to judge his family and what he perceives to be their poor performance of the role which he rejects. Specifically, his assessment of the collectivity yields a judgment of other women as self-righteous and unproductive in their roles as stay at home moms.

My perception of the church's role for women is that women are suppose to stay at home at least until the kids are grown and out of the house then if they want to go to work then that's fine. . . . There are a number of women who buy into this whole heartedly. That they choose to be dirt poor because the church wants them to stay home even though when they stay at home they're not accomplishing anything. I think a lot of stay at home moms feel that they're superior. Almost like a holier than thou attitude because "after all the church wants you stay at home and that's what I'm doing."

He mocks these women as if to quote them saying “even though my kids can barely speak the English language and don’t know anything they didn’t learn off Dora the Explorer. I’m doing my job therefore I’m a righteous person.” Sean concludes that “there are many women who stay at home that might as well be out working because they aren’t accomplishing anything when it comes to raising their children.” “Yeah you’re a stay at home mom but what are you doing? Your kids are little hellions.” His point is that just staying home is not adequate and that it does not seem to matter which parent is at home. The underlying issue that he points to is whether or not the individual is productive in terms of positive contributions to society in whatever role he or she takes on. Specifically, he is then justified in his role because he is productive—as evidenced in his mind by his children’s intelligence. His wife is justified in her role because she provides much more financially for the family than he could and because she is successful in her professional endeavors. Meanwhile, women who presume themselves to be more righteous than he or his wife, in his mind, are ultimately less justified in their roles because they do not perform the role well, as evidenced by what he interprets to be poor outcomes (i.e., poverty, behavioral issues, and poor language development). Thus, Sean’s family’s appropriation of parenting rules is justified by the *evaluate outcomes* rule.

Shelly’s use of the *evaluate outcomes* rule is manifested in her explanations of her parenting style. She expresses a desire to protect her children from experiences similar to her upbringing and the lifestyles of some family members, which she repetitively characterizes as destructive. She explains that her decisions on how to

parent were based in observing other's efforts and their mistakes, watching "the ones that worked and the ones that didn't work," then doing what worked for those whom she observed. Ultimately she tried to pass the *evaluate outcomes* rule on to her children. "I've tried to teach my children you don't have to make every mistake yourself; you can watch other people make theirs and you can learn from it."

Susan also used the *evaluate outcomes* rule to justify her parenting decisions. She explains how she was criticized for making her daughters take hard math classes when "easier" classes were optional. No such criticisms were levied in regard to her son taking math classes. One daughter was particularly discouraged from taking chemistry—on the basis of the teacher's belief that it would be too hard for a girl. Susan proudly explains further that both daughters have college degrees and that the one daughter took chemistry anyway and is now a nurse. Susan is quite direct in pointing to her daughters' successes (*qua* outcomes) to justify her decision to make them take "hard" math and science courses. These successes are also used to support teaching her children—as her mother and grandmother taught her—that "as a woman if you want to do something you can do it."

Rules and Resources in Symbolic Interaction IMSTs

Some of the specific *symbolic interaction* (SIA) rules are similar to *response no agency* (RAG) and *collectivity grounded* (COLL) rules. For example, a continued theme of *fluid role delineation*, similar to that of COLLs, is found among SIA IMSTs. Otherwise, there are no specific rules which remain constant across SIA IMSTs. There are, however, two common types of resources—*observation of*

inconsistencies and *framing*—that emerge among SIA IMSTs. Identification of inconsistencies in the organizational structure and the interactions wherein framing occurs become resources that shape rules. Also common is that on the basis of reflective consideration of interactions with other agents, individuals using SIA IMSTs are highly selective of which rules and resources they use. They also assign varying degrees of relevancy to rules and resources.

Observation of Inconsistencies

Kevin observes inconsistencies about women's role in the church. Specifically, he notes that while investigating the church he and his spouse were concerned about the male-dominated leadership of the church. The patriarchal nature of church hierarchy for Kevin was inconsistent with claims that men and women in the church were equals. The observation of what Kevin perceives to be an inconsistency became a resource for the family in determining whether or not to join the church.

If you're raised to believe in women's rights and women's quality and they fought long and hard for a number of valid issues. And so all the sudden here's a church that [pause] is going well yes you know women are equal but not not *real* equal you know [laughs]. They're equal in everything except that they can't, they can't hold the priesthood which is a large basis of the church. You know they can't hold positions of authority in the church which *require* the priesthood. And so we're going well you know do we want to [pause] yeah do we want to get involved with this or not. But we had we had good

feelings about the church and so we said well you know we'll give it a shot and if it turns out to be you know not what we thought we can always quit you know. So we went ahead and joined the church.

After nine years of church membership, Kevin currently serves as a Bishop's counselor and continues to address this inconsistency. His use of framing what the priesthood means to him functions as a resource to satisfy the dilemma for him.

I personally since I'm the man and I have the priesthood—of course I think the men view it differently than women do. As a man you learn early on that there's a difference between the priesthood and being the priesthood holder. That just because the, you know the man holds the priesthood that does not make him any better than anybody else. There's more expected of you, you know. You're held to a higher standard of accountability because of it. . . . Men understand; yes, I'm a priesthood holder but I'm still a man you know and so I have [pause] you know yeah [pause]. It doesn't prevent you from making mistakes. It doesn't make you perfect. It doesn't make you holy just because you hold the priesthood.

Katie also sees inconsistencies in how the phrase “where possible” is used to define appropriateness of a mother working outside the home. She was given a copy of an *Ensign* (magazine published by the church) article in which President Hinckley (church president 1995-2008) is reported to have said that women should stay home “where possible.” She was told that this meant she should stay home with her children. But, due to her husband's disability she felt that there was a need for her to

work outside the home: “I said ‘Hello! That’s not how it’s going to be!’ My husband’s disabled; he cannot bring in the income that we need. . . . Well, this isn’t ‘where possible.’”

Katie observed inconsistencies in how the idea of staying home “where possible” was used to justify other women—who earned less than herself—working outside the home and how the same idea was used to criticize her. She attributes the treatment she receives from other women in part to her education. “They’re not ‘comfortable’ with me either. Several sisters will say that ‘your vocabulary is too big.’ They feel like they’re homemakers and I’m overeducated compared to their situation in life.” She further identifies inconsistencies between the pragmatics of real life and the ideal expectations placed on women. “There’s a big conflict there between what is in reality very hard for women to accomplish versus our ideal. Our ideal woman will stay home with the perfect husband who goes out and has a lot of income.” Thus, Katie’s observations of inconsistencies become the resources for negotiating her experience with other women in the church. In fact, she defines her experiences with other women in the church by outlining inconsistencies that essentially become both resource and rule. Ultimately, there is an absence of rules—other than accepting the inconsistencies—for these relationships. When asked about how she deals with these inconsistencies and how others treat her, she replies “I haven’t yet resolved it. I still find it uncomfortable.”

Meanwhile, Katie also uses framing as a resource to justify enactment of the rule that she must work outside the home despite implications for social inclusion or

exclusion. She perceives that her expression of “this is not where possible” leads to exclusion. Thus, she perceives that framing the family’s financial needs and the decision for the wife to work outside the home results in social exclusion. This is contrasted with the perception that framing it as possible for her to stay home would result in social inclusion. Ultimately the resources of *observing inconsistencies* and *framing* result in rules that justify her position “this isn’t where possible” because she perceives that the reality is she has to work to avoid poverty.

Debbie also uses inconsistencies as resources to generate rules for interacting with male leadership in local congregations. Specifically, she observes inconsistencies between the perception that she is too assertive and her understanding of the responsibilities she was given. Ultimately, the rule she generated from observing these inconsistencies is “I respect the positions but they’re still men and they still make mistakes. They’re *people* and they sometimes make mistakes.” She specifies that she sees her role relevant to Bishops’ mistakes as twofold: “I allow him to grow. If it’s something so bad that I just can’t stand it then I’m going to talk to him about it.”

At the core of how Debbie interprets and responds to the inconsistencies she observes is the realization (*qua* her perception) made early on in her tenure as a church member that there are often significant differences between what church members say and do and what church leaders say. She frames this as “Who cares about my opinion? This is what the prophet says, scriptures say, therefore this is what we do.” The framing of how her opinion is not important but how the prophet’s voice

is important becomes a resource to ultimately justify her positions. That is, her interpretation of what church leaders and scriptures say is the actual rule. The resource, which legitimizes her interpretation, is the framing of *her opinion* as irrelevant. The outcome of these observations functions as the rule that she can use what male church leaders say as a resource to give voice to her own perceptions and desires. This process functions to uphold the very ideas that she claims to be irrelevant and dismissable. Ultimately, describing her opinions as unimportant does not impede her from making them well known: “I don’t mind sharing my thoughts...some men find it intimidating.” Additional framing further legitimizes her assertiveness with men in the church. “When I’m given a calling from the Lord—he did not expect me to have a calling in name only and just look cute and bring treats—you help the Bishop.” She explains that she helps the Bishop by stating her views and demanding a course of action to ensure the well-being and welfare of the sisters for whom she had been given responsibility. “I wouldn’t leave a council meeting until a plan was made.”

Framing

Rick uses terms such as team, share, and delegation to frame what is ultimately unequal distribution of work in the home. His statement that “one of the things we have decided is delegation of responsibility in our household—she’s really in charge of” is followed by a long list of household tasks that she does which includes virtually everything other than earn the income. Admittedly, he does claim he helps some when things need to be done. However, this claim is accompanied by

the framing of these tasks as things that “she is more capable of” and therefore he does not do as much of. For example, he outlines responsibilities for ensuring the family engages in spiritual activities as follows: “The wife takes more of the functional areas of making it all happen. The priesthood holder is there to make sure it happens. I think we’re pretty much a team. For our family, she’s the one in charge of family home evening.” He also explains that men cannot nurture and that “women are more nuturing, more in tune with the spirit, have more patience and understanding with children.” These and other similar explanations of “women’s abilities” provide the rationale for why responsibilities for dealing with the children, taking initiative in family religious instruction, tending to housekeeping and finances, and responding to family medical needs are primarily his wife’s. Ultimately his framing of their roles as a “team” functions to mask his abdication of responsibility as: “she’s better equipped for some tasks.”

Katie’s narrative illustrates how framing as an aspect of her interactions with other church members functioned as a resource for rules. As an investigator (i.e., someone who is not a church member but is learning about the church), she expressed concerns about the role of LDS women as *homemaker* and how her daughter would be raised as a woman in the church. The response she received was a framing of the heavy emphasis on the homemaker role as only “*part* of who we are.” Thus, framing in the context of specific interactions was a resource that transformed her perceptions of the collectivity and her IMST rules.

I said okay, wait a minute I'm not sure I'm *willing* to join a church that has *only* these capacities for girls. I talked to some other sisters and they straightened me out. They said you've got the wrong idea that this is all we can be. This is just *part* of who we are. My impression that we were creating a bunch of little quiet homemakers was wrong. . . . Okay, we can go ahead and get baptized.

Rules and Resources in Structural Engagement IMSTs

In terms of rules and resources, there is considerable overlap between STENG IMSTs and the other IMST types. Specifically, perceptions of collectivity, symbolic interaction, specific references to talks by church leaders (Ballard, in particular) and scripture, fluid role delineation, altruism, and framing are all found among STENG IMSTs. In other words, the specific rules and resources do not distinguish STENG IMSTs from the others. But, how those rules and resources are used does distinguish STENG IMSTs from the others.

Whereas structure provides rules among other IMST types, structure is primarily a resource for STENG IMSTs. Likewise, while agency may be a resource elsewhere, it emerges as a rule among STENG IMSTs. Furthermore, rules and resources are appropriated among STENG IMSTs as tools for self-improvement. This is manifested by narratives, which indicate high levels of reflection followed by cognizant and purposeful use of rules to extend choices and correct one's own behaviors with less concern about others' behaviors than is found among the other IMST types. When there is focus among STENG IMSTs on changing other's

behaviors, it is less judgmental than what is found among other IMST types.

Furthermore when individuals using STENG IMSTs focus on others' behaviors they tend to be more open to interaction and concerned with benefiting third parties (e.g., Dan's concerns about women being listened to by men in the church).

For example, organizational rules are not used to define or judge behaviors nor are they necessarily used as resources in responding to *interruptions*. Rather rules are used as tools to improve experiences in the church either for themselves or others. The ultimate rule among STENG is proactive use of the structure—and all the rules and resources it provides—to improve individuals' organizational experiences.

Although many of the rules and resources found among *collectivity grounded* and *symbolic interaction* IMST types are also found in STENG IMSTs, there are three unique rules and resources that emerge among STENG IMSTs: *structure as resource and rule*, *agency as structure and resource*, *reflection as resource*.

Structure as Resource and Rule among Structural Engagement IMSTs

Dan's efforts—as a former stake president and current stake president's counselor—to ensure that women's voices are heard by local church leaders illustrate how structure, within a STENG IMST, becomes a primary resource for rules. In his narrative, Dan outlines specific strategies he uses to help church members handle what he perceives to be a real problem regarding men listening to women.

“Sometimes they [women] feel like they get bull-dozed over; and in fact they do!”

One example of how the structure is a resource for Dan is his observation that sometimes women are “reluctant to say things to me but will say it to one of their file

leaders in the Stake young women's or Stake primary." He further explains that he has come to rely upon women in these key leadership positions to inform him when they learn of women feeling bull-dozed, uncomfortable, or left out of discussions and the decision-making process. His reasoning for being so concerned and using the church positions (*qua* structure) in this way is grounded specifically in his understanding of the emphasis that church leaders (specifically, President Hinckley and Elder Ballard) place on the importance of involving and listening to women in decision making within church administrative councils. This rationale for his concern further provides a template for justifying the specific methods Dan uses to address the issue.

Dan engages the structure by citing specific rules, talks by church leaders, or scriptural references as evidence to support his own choice of behaviors. It is interesting to note that his use of the structure is not in response to a need, but rather he derives a script for the situation in anticipation of the need. One way he does this is to point to the example of Joseph Smith (founding Church President 1830-1844) as the basis for asking women to analyze their role in the problem.

When Joseph Smith felt like someone was upset with him first thing he did was he looked into his self. And I ask them [women] and, have done this, to look into themselves and say okay now let's go back and talk about this and let's do a little reverse role and talk through it a little bit and say okay now have you done everything that you need to do? Did you have what you needed to do written out? Were you concise or did you hem haw around? Were you

direct or were you too direct? Do the men feel threatened sometimes by your delivery? Were the things that you were saying did you prayerfully think about them before you went in there? Were you prepared to do these things before you got to the meeting? And then they go through that and sometimes they go oh yeah maybe I could have done this differently.

While Dan engages the structure to suggest to others their need for personal reflection, he engages the structure further by instructing women to be more assertive when they feel men in the church do not listen:

And I counsel people who are newly called to say you know speak up. If you feel like that you're not being listened to then don't do it in the meeting but wait until after the meeting and get a one-on-one with that person and say listen I really felt like I was getting bull-dozed in this meeting or that you weren't listening to me and I do feel like I have something to offer. And I remind them that they've been called and set apart in that calling and that they have a responsibility to counsel and to share those things with their file leader.

Dan follows this similar pattern in determining how to approach men regarding the need to listen to women. He uses instructions from Hinckley and Ballard to train local priesthood leaders that they are expected to listen to the women in their congregations. When a problem comes to his attention, he instructs Bishops on strategies to remedy the situation. "I give some counsel on how maybe he should approach this. Ask him to visit with the sister one-on-one and solicit some things from her." Then Dan explains, if behaviors of these men do not change; "you're just a

little more direct and say ‘have you been listening? These people don’t feel that you are.’” This more direct follow-up training is accompanied with a list of citations from scriptures, church handbooks, and other resources from the organizational structure.

Dan is convinced that with proper training and follow-up most men will change their behaviors. But in the event they do not change, he is prepared to engage the structure and the authority it provides him to force change. “Frankly, if a brother doesn’t respond then you just have to make some changes at some point and release the individual.”

While this is an important issue for Dan, he recognizes the need for patience and ultimately engages the structure by using rules as resources to dictate his own attitudes toward the need to help women feel heard in the church. He emphasizes how phrases and concepts (e.g., be loving and kind, longsuffering, patient, diligent) in specific scriptures suggest to him what his attitude and behavior toward others should be. Structural engagement outcomes for Dan include: a desire to ensure that women’s voices are heard, personal reliance on women’s views when making decisions, efforts to instruct women on how they can be heard better, and insistence that men under his ecclesiastical jurisdiction listen to the women of the church.

Pam also demonstrates how a STENG IMST draws upon church structure and rules as resources. She explains how in her upbringing, although her mother was a stay at home mom, the roles of mother and homemaker were not considered important. She felt unprepared for her role as woman: “It was this big question mark and that was scary to me.” Her experiences and perceptions of the church structure

and its accompanying rules (i.e., Relief Society manuals, instructions on church doctrines) provided her with resources for shaping her own experience as first the family breadwinner and now stay at home mom. Outcomes of Pam's use of the structure as a resource can be summarized in her words as she describes herself as having "a lot of self confidence," and being "very glad" and "very happy" about the roles she ultimately assumed.

When I joined the church it clarified a lot of things that were foggy and it was a huge relief. I could be myself. I didn't *have* to go out there and have a big career. I could do the things that instinctively I felt confident about doing.

The STENG IMST's use of structure as resource and rule is further illustrated by Debbie's narrative about how her understanding of LDS women's roles changed over time. She explains that her original views were based on instructions she received from other women. "I was led to believe that women were quiet and subservient. You do as you're told. You have all the babies you possibly can." She perceived these women's opinions to be credible because they were older and had been in the church longer. However, as her narrative continues there is a transformation of her understanding as she engages structural properties to further define her roles, ultimately rejecting what she refers to as easier interpretations. Specifically, Debbie describes how she began researching to find what church leaders actually said about her roles as a woman. She discovered that the structure provided an alternative interpretation: "As I read what the prophets said I got a totally different viewpoint." Consequently she began to draw upon specific properties of the structure,

have increased agency, and experience behavioral and attitudinal change (*qua* structural elaboration). One outcome of the structural engagement process was a shift from the rule that she should be quiet and subservient to a rule focused on using properties of the church structure to guide (*qua* resource and rule) her attitude and behavioral choices (*qua* agency). She describes this new set of rules frankly: “I learned to go from what prophets said as opposed to just being a ‘*nice good member*.’” Another outcome was the rule: “I’m a partner. I walk with him—*not* behind him!”

Debbie’s new IMST rules were based on structural properties, not interactions or status quo maintenance. She summarizes the outcomes of engaging her new rules:

I went from a 19 year old that could not pick out a role of toilet paper without my husband telling me what color til’, uh James passed away a year ago, I had to take over the role of being the leader. You know I’ve gone the whole gamut. It was easy to be told what to do. But there comes a time when, at least for me, I realized that that wasn’t the way it was. My role is to work with him. A celestial marriage is one where two people work together with the same purpose—different roles. And sometimes you sorta help each other. He could not share with me what went on in a bishopric meeting but I could make things a little bit easier at home. He wouldn’t have to be bombarded with home things that I could take care of myself. I can put a belt on a washing machine. There’s a lot I can do for myself. I *don’t have to have* someone catering to me! Yes, I’m a southern belle! But not to the extent of what some

of my grandmothers to where they couldn't go out in the sun because it was *unlady* like. I can hoe in the garden. I can till the garden! There's a lot of things a woman can do. But on the same token he would do the same things for *me* when there were problems that I had. [All emphases are hers.]

Agency as Structure and Resource

Tim's use of agency as both structure and resource is manifested in his clarification of why he maintains the traditional roles and attitudes exemplified by his father. He explains: "I saw what my dad did and respected him, admired him. I thought I want to be like my dad I want to make those kinds of decisions." In his description of the role his parents played in defining his attitudes and behaviors, he denies that these behaviors are the default of simply repeating what his parents patterned for him. "We both—all people are to a degree a product of their upbringings a product of their environment; but a product by *choice*!" Tim further emphasizes the claim that agency plays a central role (*qua* rule) in defining his IMST:

I have this upbringing—yes and I'm affected by this upbringing. But, I *choose* a certain way. I can't just abdicate everything to well I'm my dad because this is the way my dad was. There's a lot of my dad in me and I think it's because I've chosen to follow that model.

Agency as a structure and resource is also illustrated by Katie's responses to other church members' efforts to make sense of her employment outside the home. She explains how her choice to go to college and pursue a career was made before her husband's accident, despite other's conclusions that she works because he is disabled.

Personal choice as impetus and rationale for action is a prevalent theme in this narrative. Thus, she remains purposeful in the engagement of agency as a structure and resource shaping her IMST enactment

Typically um you know typically I'll just let it go I mean I'll just say well we're just structured different but there are times that I have said you know regardless I would have chosen the path that I have chosen. I had people suggest that um well you chose the path because your husband was disabled where the opposite was true. The path was chosen and then he became disabled so—in fact he became disabled, he had his accident and I was weeks literally from graduating. So the path was already set and I think that um when people approach me I say no that was already my choice.

Nick's (whose wife stays home with their children) approach to deciding which parent should stay home with their children is another example of how STENG IMSTs use agency as both structure and resource. He explains two basic rules that govern this decision. First, "my feeling is one of us needs to be home but I don't care which one." Second; "my wife has the complete choice of whether to work outside the home." It is important to note also that Nick specifically points to the fact that for this couple the decision of which parent stays home is not affected by financial needs or unequal earning potential. Thus, Nick's focus on his wife's agency is the major rule governing this decision. While he is clear in his preference that someone stay home with the children, he also expresses his willingness to either stay home or work: "So, being able to stay at home while your wife works, there's many of us that

wouldn't mind doing that." Ultimately, he uses *her agency* as the *rule* for making this decision. Although he perceives they have a good balance where "my wife has three fourths the time at home and I only have one fourth," he maintains the role of her agency as the rule "she still works outside the home and does that whenever she wants."

Reflection as Resource

Janice uses personal reflection as a resource in her struggle over the decision to stay at home with her children or to work outside the home. Although she was comfortable in her decision to work, the church's 1995 proclamation to the world on the family (see Appendix B) caused her to feel some uncertainty. "This statement came out I that felt I had conflict with saying I should be the nurturer." Although Janice engaged structural rules, interaction with others, and personal agency; reflection was also a major resource for resolving this conflict. She explains that she spent three years struggling, studying, thinking, and reflecting on her dilemma rather than simply following a structural rule. Her investment of time for personal reflection directs her appropriation of the structure and her agency to define her role as a stay at home mom.

Katie also uses reflection as a resource. Specifically, as she finds the need to defend her role as a professional working outside the home, reflection reinforces pre-existing use of agency as structure. Her particular use of reflection as a resource is in response to others' claims that she would have made different choices if she had been a member of the church when beginning her career. Her personal reflection on the

role of her agency and subsequent career choices leads to the conclusion that she would have likely made the same choices.

Dan's STENG IMST is an example of how reflection and structural properties are tools that lead to awareness and self-improvement. His reflections on his role as a young father led to him to observe and conclude that:

I probably went brain dead for a few years thinking I just need to bring home a paycheck. I probably wasn't as good of a father as I should've been. We should've done better. Had I taken more of a leadership role we probably could have done better.

This awareness, consequential to his use of reflection as a resource, was subsequently accompanied by discovery of a rule from the church structure. He cites a talk given by Elder Richard G. Scott (Church General Authority 1977 to present) at a stake presidents' training meeting in which Scott is reported to have said: "Brethren, you do not have the full ability or the full benefit of the spirit unless you are one with your wife."

Dan's use of both reflection and the rule "*be one with your wife*" ultimately led to efforts toward improving his attitudes and behaviors relevant to his treatment of his wife. The desire to improve and be one with his wife thus became the structure (*qua* rule and resource):

It's very apparent to me the times I realize that Nancy and I are not on one same playing field. I feel a disjointedness in myself and it reminds me of

Elder Scott's talk. I recognize it's usually me that's the problem. I try to recognize what it is and sit down and visit and work through it.

Later in the narrative he returns to this rule which is consequential to his reflections:

"I goof up but try to recognize it when I do. Keep plugging on."

Summary of Rules and Resources

RQ2 seeks to discover how rules and resources are used by LDS church members in the creation and enactment of individual IMSTs relevant to their perceptions of gender roles. The six IMST types—*rigid*, *response no agency*, *response agency*, *collectivity grounded*, *symbolic interaction*, and *structural engagement*—manifest rules and resources in a variety of ways consistent with differences found across the IMST types as discussed in response to RQ1.

The role of rules and resources among *rigid* IMSTs is characterized by limited use of resources, fixed role delineation, and tight connections between rules and resources. This type of rule and role appropriation is consistent with the *rigid* IMST's focus on maintaining status quo attitudes and behaviors. Meanwhile, RNAG IMSTs demonstrate the use of multiple resources and few rules. Specifically, RNAG IMSTs rely on multiple resources to judge others and amplify their own perceptions of victimization and loss of agency. Also characteristic of RNAG IMSTs is the use of few but specific rules to justify individual judgments of others. In short, RNAG IMSTs set up justifications for frustrations and complaints resulting from the inability to derive desired outcomes from the situation. On the other hand, RAG IMSTs show how multiple rules and resources are appropriated to respond to the demands of the

particular situation. Furthermore, RAG IMSTs use the demands of the situation as resources to find solutions which are positive, flexible, and altruistic. Rather than being tightly connected to specific rules and using such rules to judge others or themselves, individuals using RAG IMSTs use a variety of rules according to the demands of the particular situation. What is consistent across RAG cases would be a focus on being positive, flexible, and altruistic. Thus, RAG IMSTs bypass the negative egocentric frustrations found among RIGID and RNAG IMSTs.

The *collectivity grounded* and *symbolic interaction* IMST types are similar in that they both show the role of communication and perceptions in shaping attitudes and behaviors. Each of these IMST types use multiple resources and create and use specific rules to aid in the interpretation and subsequent appropriation of messages from others. Three rules emerge from narratives demonstrating the COLL IMST: *observe others*, *fluid role delineation*, and *evaluate outcomes*. Meanwhile, SIA IMSTs focus more on specific interactions, inconsistencies in messages, and framing strategies as both rules and resources.

The *structural engagement* IMST shows the utility of structure and agency as reciprocally and simultaneously rules and resources. Specifically, rules and resources have three key characteristics among STENG IMSTs; *structure as resource*, *agency as structure and resource*, and *reflection as resources*. Of particular interest is the role of agency as a property of the STENG IMST type. Although agency has an important role in other IMST types (as will be discussed in RQ3) it takes on a

particularly salient role as the structure for STENG IMSTs. But as the structure, agency is also the primary resource for the STENG IMST.

The six IMST types use rules and resources in similar and dissimilar ways. The most consistent aspect of how rules and resources emerge and are appropriated across IMST types is the presence—in varying degrees—of four key dimensions: agency, structure, interaction, and structural elaboration. The role of these four dimensions in the development and enactment of immediacy structures is the subject of RQ3.

Role of Agency, Structure, Interaction, and Structural Elaboration

Critics and proponents of structuration theory are concerned with debates over the magnitude of structure and agency's roles in the creation and recreation (i.e., changes) of structures and systems. The third research question for this study explores four key dimensions—*agency*, *structure*, *interaction*, and *structural elaboration*—of a communication-based response to these arguments.

RQ3: On the basis of LDS church members' reports of their perceptions of gender roles:

How do agency, structure, interaction, and structural elaboration affect the nature of immediacy structures used by LDS church members?

Answering RQ3 required synthesizing analyses of each concept map (see Figures 3, 4, and 5), its categorization as a particular IMST type, and its placement on the 4-D graph (see Figures 6, 7, and 8). Particularly important in this process was attention to explaining the multiple degrees of influence each of the four dimensions—agency,

structure, interaction, and structural elaboration—had upon each of the six IMST types (i.e., *rigid*, *response no agency*, *response agency*, *collectivity grounded*, *symbolic interaction*, *structural engagement*). Moreover, it became particularly important to note that simple categorization of a particular IMST as high or low on a particular dimension would not provide adequate explanation of the complex, multifaceted, and dynamic interplay of each dimension with the remaining three dimensions within each IMST type. For example, the *magnitude* of interaction was virtually the same for both *symbolic interaction* (SIA) and *collectivity grounded* (COLL) IMSTs. But, the *nature* of interaction and its influence on the roles of the other dimensions (i.e., agency, structure, structural elaboration) varied across SIA and COLL IMSTs. Therefore, while some effort is placed in this section on showing how strong of a presence each dimension has within each IMST type, greater emphasis is given to exploring the *nature of each dimension's presence* and the details of how such a nature shapes the creation and use of the six IMST types. Thus, the following discussion is focused primarily on describing the *how* not simply the *what*, which this research question and the relevant data demand. The nature of how the four primary dimensions influence the IMST types can be seen by looking at how they pertain to each IMST type individually.

Four Dimensions in Rigid IMSTs

At face value it would be easy to assume that of the four dimensions, structure would have the greatest influence among *rigid* IMSTs. One caveat, however, is that not all *rigid* IMSTs are necessarily high on structure (*rigid* IMSTs with *high structure*

= 4 maps; *moderately high structure* = 2 maps; *moderate structure* = 5 maps; *moderately low structure* = 2 maps). In all these cases the lack of concern about agency was of greater influence than the degree of structural influence. The influence of agency or lack thereof, may do more to explain *rigid* IMSTs than the influence of structure. Thus, what characterizes the salient degree of agency in *rigid* IMSTs is not the presence of agency or the claim that agency has been taken away but the treatment of agency as a non-issue (*qua* absence as manifested by high frequencies of moderate agency).

The absence of concern for agency among *rigid* IMSTs facilitates default acceptance of status quo appropriation of structural rules. In other words, the structure is not actively imposed upon the individual; rather the individual—consequential to disregard for agency—passively accepts structure. For example, Lloyd explains that he would rather not have the responsibility to initiate family home evening and does not understand why his wife will not accept the task. Yet, without claiming he has lost agency in the matter, he points to a perceived structural rule as rationale for accepting this task as his responsibility:

When it comes down to it I guess I'm the leader in the home because I have the priesthood. According to my wife I should be the one to call and hold family home evening, call on this, call on that. I get tired of 'remind everybody.' It really is on the priesthood of the home to call family home evening, scripture reading, prayer and all that.

Notice that he does not actively take upon himself the role but, through not focusing on agency, the role becomes his, regardless of his personal preferences. This shows more of an acceptance of outcomes not matching personal expectations than a claim that he has lost agency, or an imposition of structure. If any structure is imposed, it would be the familial structure (i.e., his wife's appropriation of the rule) to which he responds as if his own agency is not relevant.

Another illustration of how a *rigid* IMST's lack of concern for agency leads to passive acceptance and implementation of structural properties is Rachel's explanation of why she became a stay-at-home mom: "It's just what we did. I'm old enough that that's what we did."

This point is further illustrated by Pat's acceptance of what she perceives to be a structurally (*qua* organizational level) prescribed role for women. When asked how she knew what the LDS woman's role was, she replied that "it seems it all fits right together. It's all been perfectly clear to me!" When asked to clarify the role she explains that "All the women have supported the priesthood. . . . Our role as women is to be a nurturer, a supporter. Uh, we're the push behind the priesthood." There was no reference to agency or alternative roles nor implication that the specific role had been forced upon her. Her narrative shows no awareness or concern for agency, but it does provide a matter-of-fact rationale—based primarily on examples of women from the Old Testament—for the roles she takes on.

Although there is some interaction among the *rigid* IMSTs, the nature of this interaction is mostly grounded in the individual's perceptions of familial structures.

There is very little interaction beyond conversations and lessons with parents and general observations of how family members and local church leaders behave. The interaction within *rigid* IMSTs does very little to introduce alternative options or to facilitate perceptions of agency. Interaction is, however, centered on expressions of status quo attitudes and behaviors as matters of fact grounded primarily in familial structures.

For example, the only interactions manifested in Keith's narrative were the observations of others performing their callings and specific references to his wife's request for him to make final decisions. The descriptions of both of these interactions lack depth and are directly connected to the reification of the familial rule that "I believe the man should preside."

Mike's description of how he came to have certain expectations for his role as a father, as well as his wife's role as mother, shows the limited role of communication for a *rigid* IMST. Specifically, Mike describes observations of what his parents did as the basis for his expectations. There was no indication of discussions about roles with his parents, spouse, or others. He mentions specifically observing how his father interacted with others and that his mother was always home. Interaction for this *rigid* IMST was limited yet directly connected to the conclusions (*qua* rules) that (a) "I need to provide for my family financially and spiritually" and; (b) "In my mind the role of mom would be like *my mom*. She was at home."

Structural elaboration among *rigid* IMSTs is very limited. When structural elaboration does occur, its magnitude is limited to moderately low degrees of

increased structure and increased interaction. These findings are consistent with the limited role of structure and the general absence of agency's influence among *rigid* IMSTs. Because structural elaboration among *rigid* IMSTs is so marginal, there is little to be discussed. The lack of structural elaboration among *rigid* IMSTs is consistent with the very nature of this IMST type. Specifically, since individual rules are tightly connected to status quo (particularly familial status quo) appropriation and enactment of rules and resources, we should not expect much if any development or change (even incremental). That is, structural elaboration is antithetical to the very essence of this IMST type. Hence, among *rigid* IMSTs the nature of structural elaboration would be better characterized as structural continuance than any degree of change.

Four Dimensions in Response No Agency IMSTs

The perceived loss of agency is central to the *response no agency* (RNAG) IMSTs. The absence of agency among RNAG IMSTs is of greater influence than in the *rigid* IMSTs. Whereas individuals using *rigid* IMSTs do not manifest value or concern with agency, those who use RNAG IMSTs indicate a contradiction between the desire or need for agency and the perception of its removal. Some individuals using RNAG IMSTs manifest a perception that societal structural issues and personal conditions (e.g., cost of living, unemployment, health issues) rob them of agency. This perception of lost agency fosters constrained action and greater reliance on structure as a resource for judging others and as an imposed set of rules limiting behaviors. This is exemplified by Rachel and Sherry's narratives in which they

describe what they perceive to be their husbands' failure to perform roles (i.e., enact rules) related to family religious practices such as family home evening, scripture study, and prayer.

In addition to the use of structure as the basis for judging others, some individuals with RNAG IMSTs use structure as the basis for clinging to idealized perceptions of how things are suppose to be, despite contradicting realities found in their own experiences. For example—despite recognizing that her idealized expectations of the husband's role have not been, and probably will not be, fulfilled—Sherry remains anchored to notions she derived from structural influences: “I know what I've been taught in my lessons at church what the man's role is. I, however, don't see that in my life growing up or even in my marriage now.”

Pat also uses structure to cling to idealized rules and expectations despite her own realities. In this case, the focus is on perceptions of roles that she should have performed, resulting in self-judgment. Specifically, she emphasizes regret over not being a stay at home mom and how she perceives that she should have been more nurturing as a mother. Although her children are grown and have children of their own who are almost grown this contradiction between her own realities and the idealized pattern continues to be a concern for her. “I feel like it would have been best had I not worked. If I had never started that after I became a mother. Hindsight is always so much better.” Pat portrays the decision to work as beyond her control, yet she remains tightly connected to the structural rule that she should be home. This contradiction then becomes a source of grief and guilt. She is careful to acknowledge

that others did not actively incite her guilt but that her guilt is grounded in a desire to follow a structural expectation—specifically her interpretation of rules that members are to follow the prophet and the prophet says for mothers to stay home. Her response to a question about how she resolved her guilt summarizes this point. “I never did resolve it. I still have it . . . and I will probably always have it. No one has ever said anything to make me feel guilt. Not women or men—other than the prophet.”

When interaction is present among RNAGS, it generally has a negative effect resulting in increased perceptions of lost agency. Specifically, the nature of interaction among RNAGS can be described as interaction focused on conflict wherein the individual using the RNAG IMST also uses avoidance as a conflict management strategy. Sarah responds to conflict with her in-laws by shutting herself out. “I shut myself out. I couldn’t be around his family.”

Sally’s response to conflict with her husband over plans for their children’s college education is grounded in a perceived rule that the wife “should be supportive of your husband.” Her interpretation of this rule is “to keep your mouth quiet—shut—a lot of the time and go along with what your husband believes.” Thus, she explains her response to this conflict: “I shut my mouth and didn’t argue with him.”

In cases where interaction is focused on conflict, participants typically use avoidance strategies. As we might expect from avoidance strategies, these individuals continue to hold on to the disappointment associated with the outcomes for years, and even decades later. In these cases the interaction was dissatisfying and resulted in further hurt feelings and perceptions of lost agency and an absence of subsequent

interaction with the spouse on the topic. When interaction is manifested by individuals using RNAG IMSTs, it is generally negative and functions to reaffirm perceptions of lost agency. Hence, the appropriation of interaction—as a resource—creates and recreates both the rule (*qua* expectations regarding spouse's role to lead in family religious practices) and the constraints of the structural aspects (*qua* perceived loss of agency) of the system (i.e., familial relationship embedded within organizational structure).

No consistent patterns of significant structural elaboration of either structure or agency were manifested by individuals using the RNAG IMSTs. Most structural elaboration among RNAG IMSTs was in the directions of either increased or decreased interaction. Given the nature of interaction among RNAGs, decreased interaction may have been expected while increased interaction is somewhat surprising. These findings invite further consideration of what characteristics of interaction would cause its influence to increase or decrease.

Structural elaboration toward decreased interaction is found specifically among those RNAG IMSTs whose focus is on their spouses' failure to perform particular roles. This type of communication, as described above, is generally coupled with efforts to avoid expressed conflict. Such interaction functions to perpetuate the sense of hopelessness for change in the relationship partner's attitudes and behaviors. Presumably, the increased hopelessness causes individuals to perceive less salience—and thus less desire—for interaction.

Despite its frequently limited influence, interaction does increase among some RNAG IMSTs. This unexpected structural elaboration is found among those RNAG IMSTs wherein the perceived interruption and loss of agency is not consequential to others' actions but is an outcome of societal or life conditions (e.g., health and employment issues) which they perceive to be beyond the control of either themselves or their spouses (i.e., the interruption's origin is external to the relationship). In RNAG IMST narratives where structural elaboration is toward increased interaction, the nature of interaction is limited to the individual's perceptions of family and marital relationship needs. In other words, interaction is limited to perceptions and does not necessarily involve direct or specific conversations. While interaction has a minimal role, its elaboration functions among these RNAG IMSTs to give more relevancy to structures and systems of the immediate family and less relevancy to opinions of other individuals in their extended family, church organizational, or societal systems. Thus, an outcome of RNAG IMST structural elaboration toward more interaction is the appropriation of their family's condition as a rule designed to defend against how they perceive themselves to be judged by outsiders.

Sam describes how the decision for both him and his wife to work outside the home is in response to economical hardships beyond their control. He acknowledges that this arrangement does not match the role that he perceives that the church and his family would prescribe. "It's expected to do the best we can to provide for the family without the wife come out of the home. It's still expected and preferred in the church

to allow women be home.” Nevertheless, his *perception of the situation* becomes a rule that he appropriates to justify behaviors and to minimize relevancy of structural expectations. “We’re just trying to get by—if someone is for it or against it, it doesn’t make a lot of difference!” Meanwhile, interaction, albeit limited, is focused on development of his marital relationship. Sam identifies his perception of the toll their situation has on his wife as the impetus for change in his behaviors. Specifically, because he sees how difficult things are for his spouse, he is more concerned with being sensitive, treating her fairly, and “helping her out more in what might commonly be called her role.”

Scott also discusses how the goal for his wife to “stay at home” was not realized due to familial economic needs, which he perceived to constrain their ability to act and limit their choices. For Scott there was considerable pressure from the extended family for him to perform the role of provider better so his wife could perform the role of stay at home mom. He explains that this was always their goal, but his story illustrates how the perceived realities of their situation (i.e., that they had no perceived choice) made structural and familial goals less pertinent. Ultimately, he finished a college degree and was able to provide enough income so she could “be home, most of the time.”

Sean further corroborates the nature of structural elaboration among RNAGs as he defends his role of stay at home dad, which was thrust upon him consequential to disability. He sums it up with this question: “Whose got time to worry about role-reversal? That’s just the way it is.” Meanwhile, interaction in this IMST is primarily

limited to perceptions of his wife and her needs. Specifically, he identifies how successful she is in her medical profession and that she feels her ability to help others is a gift. The family situation, coupled with his perceptions of her abilities and needs, function as rules to reinforce the claim that performing the role of provider is not a choice for him. Sean also demonstrates how these rules are appropriated in a way to minimize the relevancy of perceived structural expectations. “The church says the woman’s place is in the home. Should she quit being a servant and healer just because that proclamation up there (points to a framed copy of *The Family: A Proclamation to the World* hanging on the wall) says that a woman should stay home and nurture the kids?”

Four Dimensions in Response Agency IMSTs

The influence of interaction, agency, and structure were of equal magnitude among RAG IMSTs. Since maintenance of agency as a method for responding to life interruptions is a primary characteristic of the RAG IMST type, we should expect agency to have high levels of influence for RAG IMSTs. Although some level of structural influence should be expected, the finding that structure and agency have similar degrees of influence raises an important question about agency and why its role is not greater than that of structure. This can be answered by looking beyond the *magnitude* of structural influence and considering more specifically the *nature* of structure’s influence and how it is appropriated. Meanwhile, understanding the nature of interaction and its influence among RAG IMSTs will also help explain the roles of agency and structure, as well as structural elaboration, for this IMST type.

Interaction among Response Agency IMSTs

The nature of interaction among RAG IMSTs is twofold. First, interaction provides an awareness of an issue and thus functions as the impetus for considering the need for a response. Second, interaction functions as a mechanism for considering options available for use in responding to a situation. In other words, it is through interaction that individuals consider both that a response is needed and how they will respond.

Sam's use of the *response agency* IMST demonstrates this twofold function of interaction. He explains that he had custody of four children from his previous marriage. Specific perceptions of his first wife's preferences for how his children interact with the second wife function as an impetus for responding. Additionally, interactions with the second wife on the matter function to reveal options for subsequent behaviors.

There was a lot of pressure from my ex-wife and Janet [current wife] never being allowed to be called mom. That was not something she would accept. Janet seemed okay with it. There was a lot of discussion that she didn't want it to be a fight. That was fine she wasn't trying to replace their mom. But I wish I would've done some things different there because it seemed to have broke down with what I expected them to treat her as. Because without them feeling that she was their mom they didn't treat her as such. Then she was more of a step mom. And I think it's hurt that relationship and probably things didn't come out the way I would have liked as far as the respect that [pause] they

show her. And then the three that we adopted that's one of the rules. There are sort of struggles with that. I should put my foot down more than I do on what I expect of that [pause] and not allow the little things that I catch and hear through the whispers or whatever. I should be more forceful with that—they know that that's not acceptable.

Jacob also illustrates the twofold function of interaction for RAG IMSTs. Specifically, he desired to have several children but became aware of the need to revise his plans when his wife expressed her desire to not have any more children due to the serious threats pregnancy posed to her health. His initial response to his wife's expression of her preferences (*qua* interaction with others) was to consult literature written by church authorities on the topic (*qua* perceptions of the collectivity). Ultimately, his perceptions of her needs and interpretations of church authorities led Jacob to feel happy and satisfied with the decision to not have more children.

For Keith, interaction provided an impetus for a response when he became aware of how others judged his father. He explains how people at church would make comments about his parents. "Other people told me they see my father being very dominant overbearing and my mom as a very quiet lady and she does what he wants." These comments did not necessarily match his own interpretations of his parents. This feedback from others and its contrast with his own views became source material for discussions with his siblings. Outcomes from these conversations include judgments of the accusers, acceptance of his father's behaviors, and plans to adjust his own behaviors.

Although I disagree with how he raised us I don't think people should judge. I don't think they're doing a good job themselves. . . . I don't want to discipline my kids the way my dad did. I want to be more strict than a lot of people who let kids run around like crazy people and do whatever they want. I have to fight not being like dad. When kids run around at church I think if that were my kid. . .

Structure among Response Agency IMSTs

Among RAG IMSTs, individuals look to the structure for solutions (*qua* resources) to problems. The existence of a RAG IMST is dependent upon the problem (*qua* interruption) and its demands for a response. While structure is more prevalent among RAG than RNAG IMSTs, it also has a more positive role for RAG IMSTs. Specifically, structure plays an important positive role for RAG IMSTs because its appropriation facilitates agency. This contrasts the critical role structure plays in limiting agency among RNAG IMSTs.

Tim's decision to go directly to the Bishop to express the needs of his wife (as she experienced the Bishop-Primary President relationship) demonstrates agency in the use of structure as a resource to guide his response to a situation. In this case the situation that he perceived to require a response was his wife's emotions over the Bishop's treatment of her. "She came home pretty upset. She wasn't being heard." His description of the problem suggests a sense of urgency attached to his response: "I felt that, well the family had been attacked—Now there's a threat I need to address the issue." Tim's interactions, while grounded in helping his spouse, demonstrate how

he perceived himself to have agency. Seeking her approval for him to act underscores his perception that she too had agency in the circumstance. “I asked do you want me to take care of it?” His combining of structural properties and perceived agency as resources to solve the problem are manifested in his description of his ultimate response to the perceived threat.

I didn’t do anything really noble or magical. . . . I sat down in the Bishop’s office and I addressed the issue with the Bishop. Just quite frankly told him respectfully as a husband I’m offended if my wife comes home offended. That caught him off guard for a little bit—I think it made him listen. Everything got resolved to the best of its ability. I didn’t usurp her authority as Primary President. I didn’t go in as the Primary President. I didn’t go in to try to deliver the message that Jeny tried to deliver. I just went in as husband protecting my wife. You didn’t listen. She’s offended. If she’s offended I’m offended. I know you’ll listen to me—better listen to her!”

Jacob also shows the positive role of structure in his response to realizing that his appropriation of the rule to have many children would pose great physical risks for his spouse. After two very painful pregnancies a decision was made to not have any more children. He explains “that was an expectation going into the marriage that ended up being—not really being that way.” The original expectation as well as the decision to not have more children were both grounded in structural properties.

Specifically, Jacob says:

I kinda always pictured lots of kids. Of course after I got married reality crept in that it's—in fact I uh I even went and read some of the general authorities. I remember reading what President Kimball had to say about it. He said that you should not hold back from having children except in certain circumstances for the health and well-being of the mother. And uh Sheila had a real hard time with her first two pregnancies. It was really serious; really bad. After the second one she just didn't want to have any more kids after that. And I realized you know hey it's best not to. And so we didn't. That was an expectation I had going into the marriage that ended up being you know not really being that way. I'm happy with it and I'm satisfied with it. We had two children and some members of the church have lots of kids. We didn't. I thought we would and we didn't and that's fine.

In this case the concern for his wife's health was a primary factor, but in the decision-making process this factor was accompanied by influential, yet positive and altruistic, appropriation of structural properties.

Another example of the way structure plays a positive role in RAG IMSTs is Justin's appropriation of New Testament scriptural instruction—that men are to give of themselves for their wives as Christ gave himself for the church—as the basis for encouraging his wife to return to college, in response to her frustrations with the stay at home mom role.

Structural Elaboration among Response Agency IMSTs

Of the four dimensions, structural elaboration was most prevalent among RAG IMSTs. This is not surprising since a central characteristic of RAG IMSTs is the perceived demand to discover and use alternative responses to life interruptions. The very nature of a RAG IMST mandates high levels of structural elaboration. For RAG IMSTs, structural elaboration is mostly in the direction of increased agency. RAG structural elaboration toward increased agency is directly linked to one's perceptions of a situation and his or her initial ability to act. As individuals perceive they have more agency, they appropriate (i.e., draw upon) that agency more. In turn, as agency is appropriated more, the perception of agency continues to increase.

In response to his father's loss of employment and subsequent inability to provide for his family, Marvin attributed his family's financial problems to the father's unwillingness to move or change professions to secure employment. But he perceived more agency in the matter than apparently did his father. His description of the situation and his subsequent choices illustrate the point that once he perceived some agency, he acted upon it and perceived increased agency.

That whole situation did a lot of things to me. I realized that there was a lot that he probably could've done—be a little more ambitious . . . be an entrepreneur but that would've required ambition. He didn't have it. He doesn't have it today. When I realized that there was more that he could've done I realized that there's more that I could do.

Malinda discusses her perceptions of men abusing power and how debilitating it could be to her and others. Speaking of her own experiences with sexual abuse, she illustrates the role of agency as she describes her choices to act rather than respond as if she had no agency. “It’s not who I am! It’s part of who I am. I’m proud that I survived it. And I’m proud that I’ve worked my butt off to heal! And I know that I can be a help to others. But, as far as it being a sum of who I am—no.” Acting upon her perceived agency in the matter led her to perceive greater agency, which is manifested by her increased efforts to be proactive in challenging abuses of power and in training others how to prevent and respond to abuses of power. Each effort to respond in these ways seems to strengthen her resolve and ability. Thus, acting upon perceived agency leads to increased perceptions of agency and greater ability to act.

Initially agency does not appear to be an issue for Keith’s narrative about his father’s discipline practices. However, as the story unfolds and the role of interaction begins to transform the circumstances, as well as the nature of Keith’s IMST, we see his willingness (*qua* agency) to speak out in judgment of others (i.e., those who judged his father). Acting upon perceived agency in this manner consequentially facilitates the use of more agency as Keith then provides his own unique judgment of his father, accompanied by simultaneous expressions of defense of his father and his desire to not be like his father. In this case, the use of agency did not necessarily cause increased use of agency, but it did facilitate continued use of agency.

Four Dimensions in Collectivity Grounded IMSTs

Structure, agency, interaction, and structural elaboration all have high degrees of influence among *collectivity grounded* (COLL) IMSTs. The nature of each dimension's role across all narratives manifesting COLL IMSTs is multifaceted and complex. Therefore, it makes sense to consider each dimension independently.

Structure among Collectivity Grounded IMSTs

Among *collectivity grounded* (COLL) IMSTs, structure facilitates perceptions of collectivity. Specifically it is through accepting church positions and volunteer participation in church programs that individuals are able to observe others. The ability to observe others is consequential to participation in specific relationships (*qua* immediacy systems) provided by the structure. Thus, structural properties provide partial bases for individual standpoints, which in turn help shape interpretations.

Carl's description of how he came to see the relevancy of specific instruction on how women should be treated is entirely based on observations he was able to make in the context of his various priesthood leadership positions, particularly as a Bishop and later as a High Priest group leader. He points to Elder Ballard's frequent general conference talks about the need for men to ensure that women's voices are heard in Ward Councils (i.e., local ecclesiastical decision-making committees). Initially, simply hearing the conference talk is a direct outcome of participation in the structure via conference attendance. This led Carl to understand the instruction (*qua* rule) but not necessarily see the need for its repetition in conference talks. In fact, he indicates that he did not understand why so much emphasis was being placed on this principle.

The salience and appropriation for the rule, and the need for its emphasis, became apparent to Carl only subsequent to observing how some other men treated women in the context of church leadership positions. His narrative illustrates this point:

It seemed to come naturally for me to include women and try to treat them as equal in the decision-making process. Even though that was my intent all along I think watching those women and how incredible they were really reinforced my view that Elder Ballard is exactly right. Frankly after a while I found it boring when he would give those kind of talks because at least in my mind I was doing all the things that he said. But! One of the greatest shocks to me is when I actually see men in the church treating women that way. Like he talks about. They ignore their counsel or sometimes even belittle them in sometimes direct ways. And I am absolutely flabbergasted. . . . It's distressing to me when I run across that so I see the need for Elder Ballard's kind of talks.

Rachel's position in the church (*qua* participation in the structure) as Stake Relief Society President also provided contextual basis for her observations of men whom she judged negatively. She explains that some of the men she served with in the context of this position were very supportive and great to work with while the unwillingness of several others to listen to her caused a great amount of personal distress. This distress became the basis for her assumptions about how these men would perform in other contexts, particularly with their wives. "I wondered how they treated their wives when they would not listen to what I said or not give a thought to the things that I said." Rachel derived conclusions about these men from perceptions

and observations facilitated entirely by structural properties (i.e., church positions provided context for interactions and observations).

Kaitlyn's experience as a Relief Society President contrasts that of Rachel's in that she has positive perceptions of her interactions with men in the context of church service. The process, however, is the same. Kaitlyn's perceptions and observations were entirely facilitated by structural properties that provided a context wherein she would have unique opportunities to make observations of others, which would not have occurred were it not for participation in the structure. Kaitlyn asserts that there are positive relationships and observations that come directly from her church position. She specifically points to her positive experiences working with Bishop: "In my calling I feel like I'm totally supported backed up and listened to by the Bishop." Thus, while the individual outcomes may vary drastically, the process of creating perceptions based on observations made possible only through participation in the structural properties (*qua* church positions) remains the same as a characteristic of structure's role among COLL IMSTs.

Structure also facilitates perceptions of collectivity for COLL IMSTs from the level of societal structures. Specifically, among COLL IMSTs an individual's observations of societal conditions, such as employment and economic shifts (e.g., more women working outside the home and higher costs of living), accompany perceptions and interpretations of church teachings as the basis for personal IMST rules.

Carl's attitude toward household chores as part of the woman's responsibility was initially based on observations of his parents' behaviors. He describes a transition in his understanding which led him to acknowledge that he could help out with household chores. The new rule for Carl that "even if a woman did have traditional roles . . . there was no reason a man couldn't help out more around the home" was influenced primarily by societal conditions as structural properties. Carl summarizes how society influenced his shift in attitude toward role-delineation: "I think my attitudes are probably a mixture of the traditional things I saw growing up vs. the women's liberation movement in the 70s."

Sean also demonstrates the role of societal conditions in shaping the COLL IMST. Specifically, Sean explains how his attitudes toward women's roles—which were shaped by societal structures—made accepting an all-male priesthood difficult.

That was contrary to the way I was brought up to believe. Especially in the age of the '70s and '80s when women's abilities were being proclaimed and proven. We were trying to get the women's equality issues behind us then all of a sudden there's this church. They'll teach you they'll say men and women are equal and they walk beside each other especially in the faith. Yet they say the man is the head of the family. He has the priesthood.

In this case the very nature of the individual's earliest experiences with the church structure were shaped by previous external perceptions grounded in observations of societal conditions as structural properties.

Agency among Collectivity Grounded IMSTs

Agency is manifested in two ways among COLL IMSTs. First, COLL IMST narratives show a desire to compensate for perceived parental shortcomings. Second, COLL IMSTs indicate a clear desire to have what they perceive to be factors contributing happiness in other's lives.

Shelly shows agency in her efforts to compensate for negative parental influences in her life. She characterizes her parents' relationship as filled with abuse, alcoholism, infidelity, and ultimately divorce. She summarizes her initial conclusions about family relationships by saying "I grew up thinking all men were crumbs. I never knew a happy couple." Her observations of others subsequent to joining the church (*qua* interaction facilitated by structure) led to agency which is focused on compensating for the lack of positive parental role modeling. The nature of her agency and the related shift in her IMST properties are illustrated by comments such as "I wanted to know what they knew so I could have it too." This type of agency is further indicated by continued efforts to protect her children from the type of upbringing she experienced. "I don't want to do anything as a mother that would give them an excuse to do things that were *destructive*. . . . They've never known the kind of life that *I* had and I never wanted them to know *that*." Shelly's efforts to have a better life than what her parents provided shows a desire to compensate for her perceptions of their failures. Her efforts to provide a safer healthier environment for her children further exemplify the desire to compensate for parental shortcomings.

For Ryan, agency—as manifested by a desire to act in ways that compensate for what he perceives to be paternal failures—is a central focal point of the narrative. Ryan repeats this theme frequently with comments such as “I wanted to be there like my father wasn’t there” and “I want to be stronger and do what my father didn’t do.” For Ryan agency extends beyond expressions of desire to actual efforts to, as he summarizes, “be the *best* husband I can . . . to be active so I can help my wife and we can teach our children the gospel *together*.”

The second way agency is manifested among *collectivity grounded* IMSTs is through a focus on desiring to “have what others have.” This focus is a central characteristic of the *collectivity grounded* IMST type. Therefore, it should be expected to emerge here as a characteristic of agency’s role as well as a rule and resource central to the IMST enactment.

JoAnn’s choice to be a *stay at home mom* is primarily grounded in observations of others, but furthermore she specifically points to a desire to have what others have. The key here is that the enactment of the stay at home mom role was not merely consequential to others suggesting this was a role she should perform. JoAnn’s enactment of the role is primarily grounded in what she perceived to be desirable outcomes in others’ lives. “I have a degree in early childhood education and social work so definitely I saw the benefits of being at home. Other than just being influenced that way through church I saw the benefits of children who had a stay at home mother as opposed to a mother who worked and children who went to daycare.” These observations resulted in a specific choice to perform the role. “There was no

question in my mind that's what I wanted. . . . I don't want anyone else teaching and influencing my children." Thus, the performance of the stay at home mom role is not simply a matter of following a rule derived from observing others; but it is a function of agency grounded in perceptions of the quality of outcomes experienced by others and desires to have the same benefits.

Jacob tells of his experiences as young single adult visiting the Anderson home on Sunday afternoons with other single adults as the impetus for his desire (*qua* agency) to create a particular climate in his own home.

I remember going over and just being around that family and stuff. You know just not necessarily focusing on him as the leader but just thinking that's the way I want my family to be. I wanted my family to be the type of family that uh you know that would take people in and feed them and just really help others and bringing them around. To me that was what it was all about. Being able to reach out to others with your family and bring them into your family so to speak.

Because that helped me so much I wanted to help others that way.

Interaction among Collectivity Grounded IMSTs

COLL IMSTs focus on interaction primarily as observations and perceptions of collectivity. Among COLL IMSTs, interaction also plays a significant role in the nature of the other three dimensions (structure, agency, and structural elaboration). Among COLL IMSTs, interaction becomes a rule and a resource for defending or validating the appropriation of rules and resources of the church structure and related systems.

Tim's discussion of the validation he receives from observing others illustrates this point. Tim explains how he chooses to perform a role as father and husband, which was modeled for him by his own father. The critical role of interaction as a resource for justifying his role enactment is shown by his discussion of how observations of his friends influence his attitudes toward this appropriation of rules.

The path I've chosen for lack of any other way to put it I think has just been validated further by seeing other people. Being active in the church and seeing families seeing couples seeing how they interact. Certainly when you're in a big setting like that you see the good the bad. I think for the most part validation is probably the biggest thing. I've chosen my way in spite of my friends or regardless of them but by seeing, you know friends that have problems. Well, maybe they have these problems because they chose x, y, and z. Well, I chose a, b, c. See the difference? And in my mind there's not a focal thing it's not a discuss thing. You know, it's just in my little teeny pea brained head there is validation. . . . To say that my friends have directly affected my belief and understanding of what a man's job is what a man's role is or what a woman's role is—I don't. They've—there's been no direct role or involvement.

Gilbert also finds validation for his interpretation and appropriation of rules through interactions and observations of peers. "The guys I grew up with basically had the same values that I had. I think we were a support structure for each other." Although these observations were made during his teenage years, the specific validation of rules continues to have relevancy for Gilbert as a grandfather. "I don't

see those things changing in my life. I think they've been the same for a long long time."

Structural Elaboration among Collectivity Grounded IMSTs

Structural elaboration among *collectivity grounded* (COLL) IMSTs is primarily toward increased interaction. To understand why this is the case we should look at the initial role of interaction among COLL IMSTs. Specifically, COLL IMSTs begin by drawing upon perceptions of the collectivity as a source for rules and resources, which are then used to shape behavioral decisions. Individuals who use interaction (*qua* perceptions of the collectivity) in this way also find satisfaction in the outcomes of their behavioral choices. This satisfaction provides validation for the initial reliance upon interaction. In other words, interaction initially functions as the source for behavioral choices. When these behavioral choices provide satisfying outcomes, they function as rationale for further reliance upon perceptions of the collectivity. Thus, structural elaboration toward increased interaction is a natural outcome of the process used by COLL IMSTs.

Kaitlyn's COLL IMST shows how structural elaboration in the direction of increased interaction is a result of satisfying outcomes from the initial process of observing others. She cites rewards from her interactions with others and from using her perceptions of prophets' wives.

As far as church service goes I think that for me that's been a very positive experience in both official callings and maybe just compassionate service that's not so you know sustained and set apart type callings. Umm I love learning about

the prophets' wives. I just finished a book by Sister Hinckley and I feel like those women are great examples. This book that I ran into was letters that her kids had compiled and she has her little complaints and her little petty things that just make it so you totally see that she's an everyday person yet here she's this great mother and leader in the church. So you know I think for moments like that those are positive things for me just kinda a little pat on the back that you're doing great. These examples provide the basis for her own IMST rules. On the basis of rewarding interactions she increases the degree to which communication is used. The nature of her increased interaction and reliance upon her perceptions of the collectivity manifest a sense of being valued, which she finds particularly rewarding.

Anything that I feel like is a concern or I'm worried about a person in the ward or just we need to visit I feel like I'm totally supported and backed up and listened to by the Bishop. One Bishop *often* has said: "Golly when you're gone I don't know what's going on I feel like it's through the women in the church that—the men aren't going bring in the problems it's the wives that talk and they'll let you know and then you can let me know otherwise I feel like when you're gone I don't know what's going on." So I totally feel like I'm listened to as far as that goes. I think they take seriously what I have to say.

JoAnn also illustrates the point that structural elaboration toward increased interaction can be attributed to satisfying outcomes from initial observations. She relies first on her observations of others, which suggested to her that they were happy in their family relationships. JoAnn sought to replicate the behaviors she perceived

brought happiness to those she observed. Thus, perceptions of the collectivity was the basis for her own IMST rules, particularly for the rules that she should want to have children and be a stay at home mother. JoAnn reports the outcome of implementing these rules as very satisfying for her. This satisfaction then leads to increased interactions with others. The nature of this increased interaction is shaped by the satisfying outcomes of enacting rules, which had their origins in previous interactions (i.e., performing the stay at home mom role). Specifically further interactions (i.e., observations) reinforced her interpretations and implementation of examples (i.e., that staying home with your children has positive outcomes) from the collectivity. These interactions provide her with opportunities to explain and defend her choices to others.

JoAnn: Most of my friends are you know are really positive and supportive. I do have a few friends who outside of the church who you know grew up in a totally different realm. They work and they kinda can't comprehend staying at home and having to take care of the kids all day.

Ray: Have they made comments about it?

JoAnn: Um just like "I don't know how you do it" or you know "I could never stay home all day with the kids" and "they'd drive me crazy." That kind of stuff.

Ray: How do you respond to that?

JoAnn: Just that I love my kids and I can't imagine—I don't want anyone else teaching and influencing my kids at this, you know, at the early stage of life that I should be doing that myself.

The process is also followed by Susan who looks to interactions and perceptions of the collectivity as the source for a legacy of strong women. This legacy is underscored by general observations of women in her family. The personal mantra generated by these observations—“as a woman if you want to do something you can do it”—is perpetuated through increased interactions, manifested by her efforts to teach her daughters that they can accomplish anything they want. Her personal rewards from this observation-based rule provide motivation to express similar attitudes and expectations in interactions with her daughters and other women.

Four Dimensions in Symbolic Interaction IMSTs

The magnitude of structure, interaction, and agency found among symbolic interaction (SIA) IMSTs is similar to that of the *collectivity grounded* (COLL) IMSTs. However, further analysis reveals that the specific nature of how these dimensions operate in SIA IMSTs differs from their functions among COLL IMSTs. Differences in the functions of structure, interaction, and agency are manifested further when examining structural elaboration. Ultimately, this review of the four dimensions reveals the central role of communication (*qua* interaction) across the other three dimensions among SIA IMSTs.

Structure and Interaction in Symbolic Interaction IMSTs

One of structure's functions among *symbolic interaction* (SIA) IMSTs parallels its role among *collectivity grounded* (COLL) IMSTs. In both SIA and COLL IMSTs structure provides context for interaction. As we might presume given the differing nature of each IMST type, the context provided varies from one IMST type

to the next. Whereas structure among COLL IMSTs provides context for general observations, structure provides SIA IMSTs with context for specific interactions. The more defining nature of structure among SIA IMSTs becomes apparent as we consider its interconnectedness with the role of interaction among SIA IMSTs. Interaction's influence in SIA IMSTs is similar to its influence in COLL IMSTs. Despite some similarities across the two IMST types, the nature of interaction found in SIA IMSTs does differ from the interaction found in COLL IMSTs. Among COLLs individual perceptions of the collectivity shape the IMST. However, among SIA IMSTs there is *specific discussion with others* about specific structural properties.

Katie, for example, struggled with the structural emphasis on the homemaking role as a priority for women in the church. Her perception of this rule was based on patterns of messages from people around her. "I started right away in Relief Society seeing that there was a pattern trending towards homemaking as the top role for a woman." She further explains that she came to understand that this was the rule because several people came to her home and told her as much during her three month investigation of the church. This expectation contradicted her own preconceived views of her roles as a highly educated business owner. This contradiction was important enough to her that she was not willing to join a church that was going to teach her daughter she had to be a homemaker. These concerns were the subject matter of specific interactions with other women in the church who clarified that the homemaker role "is just part of who we are." Specific interactions

with other individuals about her perceived conflict resulted in an adjustment of how she perceived the structure. Another outcome of these interactions was knowledge of additional rules (e.g., that church presidents have encouraged women repeatedly to get an education; that women have many roles they can perform as members of the church). Katie subsequently gave relevance to the additional structural information provided by her friends and ultimately appropriated the rules in a way that justified acceptance of the structure which espouses, among other roles, the homemaker role as an expectation for women.

Malinda's narrative about encountering abuse of power also illustrates how specific structural issues become content material for interaction among SIA IMSTs. She explains that her discussions with certain friends is focused on how they are overcoming a shared experience of what she characterizes as "male abuse of power." Structure is a critical part of this ongoing discussion because of its pluralistic role for them. They point to structure as a facilitator of the abuse of power as well as a resource for overcoming the negative effects of said abuse. It is particularly interesting to note how the appropriation of structure—through specific interactions—can be therapeutic and ultimately used to reinforce desires to remain connected to its properties. This is manifested in how Malinda summarizes these interactions: "The main topic of conversation is 'what are you learning as an individual to make yourself a better saint?'"

In addition to resolving personal dilemmas with structural properties, interactions for some SIA IMSTs is focused on clarifying role delineation,

particularly within the familial structure. For example, Rick and Kevin both report having specific conversations with their spouses about familial rules governing assignment of tasks (e.g., putting children to bed, washing dishes and laundry) and roles (e.g., breadwinner, nurturer).

Agency in Symbolic Interaction IMSTs

Interaction's transformative role in SIA IMSTs is underscored when considering the agency dimension and connections between interaction and agency. Specifically, agency emerges as subsequent to interaction. In other words, it appears that communication facilitates action.

In her role as Young Women's President Shelly felt she did not have support or respect from the Young Men's President. Shelly felt strongly that as counterparts in the youth organization they needed to support and listen to each other. Rather than respond with her initial sentiments of frustration and anger, she chose to suspend reactions to this treatment until after discussing the matter with others. Specifically, she consulted with her Bishop, who gave her feedback that shaped choices about how she would act toward the young men's leader. "I just tried to do my calling. . . . I didn't try and tell him what to do or try to brow beat him or belittle him. I just ran my organization."

Katie also suspended action until after interaction with others. Her decision to leave or join the church hinged heavily upon whether or not her daughter would be taught that the primary role for women was homemaking. In this case the decision to act, and ultimately join the church, was made only after soliciting interactions with

others—whose interpretations of structural properties set her at ease with the decision.

Malinda lists several interactions with Bishops as motivations to move. More recently the decision to not move was made subsequent to positive interactions with her current Bishop: “I absolutely adore Bishop Sadler. I think he’s a solid good man he’s not phony. . . . I hope to not move anymore.”

Structural Elaboration in Symbolic Interaction IMSTs

Since a major aspect of the SIA IMST is discussion about perceptions, specific structural properties, and role delineation, we would expect structural elaboration among SIA IMSTs to be in the direction of increased interaction. Indeed interaction is a critical aspect of the SIA IMST type’s structural elaboration. Specifically, structural elaboration among SIA IMST maps is primarily in two directions: *increased interaction and agency*, and *increased interaction and structure*. Hence, the central role of communication can be further understood by examining its role in the structural elaboration of both agency and structure.

Increased interaction and agency. SIA IMSTs with structural elaboration toward increased interaction and increased agency tend to find a specific rule satisfying. Interaction functions in these maps to validate rules and underscore agency, but does not necessarily reflect greater reliance upon (or influence from) structure. Validation among SIA IMSTs is different than validation among COLL IMSTs. In COLL IMSTs, validation is focused on observing outcomes. However, validation for SIA IMSTs comes from more discussion and specific interactions

within the context of specific relationships about specific rules. Individuals using SIA IMSTs talk about choices to appropriate specific rules and resources in particular ways. This discussion is not so much about the rule itself but the justification of its appropriation.

Malinda follows a rule based on beliefs that church experiences vary according to geographic location and that she is entitled to live in a place where she can have a positive church experience. Specifically, she exclaims: “I don’t think the church is the same everywhere you go. If you prioritize your own personal growth you need to live in a place that nurtures your own growth.” Enactment of this rule resulted in several moves around the country accompanied by continued interaction with others whereby she found justification for her geographical pursuit of the desired experience. She describes several specific conversations with Bishops and others that caused her to conclude that particular places were undesirable and that many others had similar experiences in these places. Thus, she moved often until finding a place where she felt comfortable. She describes specific interactions with her current Bishop, Stake President, and others who have further validated her appropriation of the rule. In the context of these relationships she discusses her concerns about abuses of power and reasons for her frequent moves. Instead of running from unpleasant situations she perceives herself to have greater agency and desires to remain where she finds satisfaction of her needs. The agency that allows her to choose to remain is facilitated by specific validating interactions. As she summarizes, “I am very comfortable here. I’ll drive around and go ahhhh! I hope to not move anymore.”

Susan reports specific interactions that validated her decision to return to school (*qua* rule appropriation) and consequentially increased her agency. Among the specific interactions she cites is discussion with her husband about a particular individual's judgments of their decision. "There was one guy who told my husband 'you're going to be held accountable for sending your wife to school.' We thought he was crazy, and I was kinda mad. I said 'how come my husband is going to be held accountable and I'm not?'" Specific conversation with her husband regarding this comment and their shared opinion about its absurdity provided validation for Susan's rule appropriation.

Rick further illustrates how, by providing validation, interaction facilitates increased agency. He explains that his understanding of the man's and woman's roles were initially shaped primarily by his spouse. "My wife taught me priesthood roles and that most LDS women didn't work. I think the general standard is that the man is expected to work. We talked about the expectation that she would work." While discovery of the rule through specific interaction is consistent with the SIA IMST type, it is important to note—when looking at the structural elaboration for this particular IMST—that the continued appropriation and enactment of these rules is reinforced by interactions with others. Specifically, Rick describes how he finds positive feedback on the matter in discussions with his wife, extended family, church friends, and non-church friends. The effect of these interactions on his perceptions of agency and accurateness of his rule appropriation is shown in his concluding remarks

“I think for our relationship we’ve really talked about it, and we’re both in agreement that we’re comfortable doing what we’re doing.”

Increased interaction and structure. Contrasting the structural elaboration of interaction and agency that focuses on one’s own appropriation of rules, SIA IMSTs with structural elaboration in the direction of increased interaction and structure are focused on correcting how rules and resources are interpreted and appropriated by other individuals.

Debbie uses structure to call people out on what she perceives to be their mistakes. She explains that in her relationships with male leaders in the church she respects their priesthood positions but maintains “they’re still men and they still make mistakes.” Regarding a particularly young (i.e., twenty-something) Bishop she identified her role as “I’m responsible to support him and allow him to grow, but if something is so bad I can’t stand it I can talk to him about it.” For this and other relationships with men in the church she acknowledges that they sometimes find her intimidating, but a persistent theme in her narrative is “I don’t mind sharing my thoughts.” The key point regarding the structural elaboration toward increased interaction and structure is that when she confronts the young bishop or other men in the church about their poor performance (i.e., as she perceives it to be) she frames her complaints in claims of structural compliance. Thus another persistent theme in her narrative is “Who cares about my opinion? This is what the prophet says, scriptures say, therefore this is what we do.”

Gilbert discusses how fulfilling his roles as Bishop for seven years and Stake President for nine years involved interactions in which he felt required to use structural properties to shape others' behaviors. He explains that despite some resistance from others, he continued to draw upon structural properties in the context of interactions wherein he felt the need to provide counsel and direction.

There are uhh [pause] some people who accept counsel very well and make an effort to work well with others. And, uhh, are more I guess willing to try things that they're counseled to do while others find it difficult to accept counsel. I guess they're more set in their ways. . . . I think that we all uh [pause] we're all individuals who have umm probably strong opinions and that we umm have a preconceived notion of how things should be done. As priesthood leaders quite often you'll have the opportunity to counsel people in one direction or another as to how their program should go and many people receive that uhh very well. Occasionally you'll find uh someone who is uhh strong willed that they are going to have it their way or not. And no matter whether you ask them to pray about it or not it's going to be their way.

When asked how this resistance affected his efforts to counsel others, Gilbert replied "I don't think it had any effect at all." However, he does explain that there was continued reliance upon the structure to guide his efforts in these interactions. Gilbert also specifies that his efforts to listen to women increased over time as a result of structural influences. He summarizes the positive outcomes of this shift: "I think it was helpful. I think it made them feel more needed and wanted and more a part of the

umm of the decision-making process in the ward and stake. I think they appreciated that.”

Katie describes how expectations of what women should wear to Sunday services function as rules (*qua* structural properties), which are often not conveyed to first time visitors. Katie perceives, however, that such information should be conveyed in order to increase the visitor’s comfort. She tells of a specific experience where the sister missionaries brought an investigator to church who was dressed in jeans and a tee-shirt. Katie explains that it did not matter to her how the investigator was dressed, but that she was concerned about the investigator’s feelings. Therefore, she drew upon the structural properties (i.e., unspoken dress code, access to missionaries, perceived responsibility to assist missionaries) and addressed the issue directly with one of the sister missionaries. Her description of the conversation shows how structure is used in the SIA IMST to shape other’s behaviors. In this case her focus was not necessarily on how the investigator dressed, but it was on the missionary’s failure to discuss the topic.

I said “Did you tell her that *typically* this is what she’s going to find when she gets here so *she* won’t be uncomfortable?” She was like “well no, she’s got to learn to choose for herself.” I said “No you’ve got to tell her because that’s not fair. Basically what you’re doing is not fair. To bring someone whose dressed in a different way. She’s just going to feel uncomfortable and she can’t accept the message when she’s sittin’ there looking around going ‘oh my gosh I’m the only person dressed in jeans and a tee-shirt here.’”

Four Dimensions in Structural Engagement IMSTs

All four dimensions play significant roles in *structural engagement* (STENG) IMSTs. Specifically, structure and agency have more influence among STENG IMSTs than they do among other IMST types. While interaction plays a significant role for STENG IMSTs it has less magnitude among STENG IMSTs than among *collectivity grounded* and *symbolic interaction* IMSTs. Action within STENG IMSTs is characterized better by the finding that they engage in more purposeful use of the structure.

STENG IMST maps show that structure is not necessarily imposed but that individuals purposefully use (i.e., exercise agency) structural properties not as an explanation for reifying patterns (i.e., rules) of behavior but as a tool (i.e., resource) to accomplish personal purposes and goals. In other words, agency is manifested in high degrees and functions among STENGs to transform rules into resources.

The way structure and agency operate among STENG IMSTs suggests high levels of access to and understanding of rules and resources. It also suggests high relevancy given to particular rules and resources. Structural engagement requires perceptions of agency and understanding of structure. Interaction may play a role in helping individuals perceive that they have agency. Interaction may also play an important role in making sense of structural properties, and considering alternatives for how rules and resources can be appropriated.

The roles of interaction, structure, agency, and structural elaboration among STENG IMSTs have some similarities with their functions in other IMST types,

especially COLL and SIA. There are, however, some important distinctions in how the patterns of influence from these dimensions contribute to the STENG IMSTs. Specifically, analysis of the 4-D graphs reveals two categories of relationships between structure and interaction among STENG IMSTs: (1) STENG IMSTs with higher levels of both structure and interaction; and (2) STENG IMSTs with higher levels of structure and lower levels of interaction. The dynamic interplay and mutually constitutive significance of the four dimensions can be seen by analyzing patterns in their relationships in the context of these two categories.

High Structure and High Interaction among STENGs

Among structural engagement (STENG) IMSTs where high structure and high interaction are manifested, interaction is used as a mechanism to convey personal interpretation of how rules and resources should be appropriated. Meanwhile, structure also provides content (*qua* rules, interpretations, and appropriations as symbols) for interaction (*qua* message design) among STENG IMSTs with high structure and high interaction. Essentially rules from the structure become resources for the individual's efforts to persuade others to comply with their own expectations. Specifically the messages are generally about particular rules. These messages are directed at changing situations and reflect a presumption of the accuracy of the individual's opinions about interpretation and appropriation of rules and resources. These messages are also underpinned by individual assumptions about his or her agency (i.e., agency appears to be perceived of by participants as a given) and

structural competencies (i.e., knowledge and access to rules and resources). STENG IMSTs with high structure and high interaction also show higher degrees of agency.

Christine's experience in confronting her Bishop regarding decisions he had made that she did not perceive to be consistent with church policy illustrates the interdependent roles of structure and interaction within a STENG IMST. The nature of her interaction with the Bishop and her specific messages regarding implementation of policies were based on the confidence she had in her interpretations and appropriations of the church handbook of instructions. Christine's description of the handbook manifests her confidence in the accuracy of her interpretation of rules: "With things in writing from the church there's not too much room to stray um you know question-wise. This is the way it is. This is how it's done." Therefore, the message for her Bishop was that his decision was "a good idea but not appropriate." She further pointed to specifics from her handbook to legitimize her claim that his idea was inappropriate. Christine followed similar patterns in subsequent interactions with priesthood leaders because she perceived positive outcomes from this interaction. Hence, interaction was used to convey personal interpretations of rules, while structure became content for the specific message(s).

Jacob also manifests confidence in his appropriation of specific rules as he uses interaction to convey his personal perceptions of church policy regarding familial roles. He specifically points to a belief in two rules—for the husband to not coerce and for the wife to not work outside the home—as critical content for discussions with his wife regarding her employment decisions. He explains that the basis for these

rules came from his readings of what church leaders have said on the topic. Although his message to her had some inconsistencies, it is clear he was using interaction to convey his personal opinions on the matter and that he perceived those opinions to be based upon accurate interpretation and appropriations of rules.

What I always told her was that I didn't believe in coercion in marriage and I felt like if she wanted to go to work then I'll support her. I told her many times if you want to go to work that's fine. I think you'd be better not to do that. We've been encouraged not to do that but if you feel really strongly that you want to do that then that's fine.

Dan's efforts to ensure that women are listened to by male leaders in the church are another example of the interdependent nature of structure and interaction characteristic of some STENG IMSTs. In his narrative, he illustrates multiple cases where he purposefully engaged in individual face-to-face discussions designed to instruct others on his interpretations of how men and women should interact with each other. While he used his church positions (*qua* structural property)—first as stake president and later as counselor in a stake presidency—to legitimize initiating the discussion, the content of the discussion was driven by specific scriptural references and instructions from general authorities of the church (*qua* rules which he perceived to be relevant). In this case, interaction functioned to provide context for the recreation of Dan's understanding of the structure.

In each case where a STENG IMST manifested high levels of structure and interaction the ability of the individual to convey his or her perceptions of correct

interpretations and appropriations of structural properties was also accompanied with higher degrees of perceived agency. For example, the Primary President was able to confront the Bishop because she perceived that action to fall within the realm of her ability to act (*qua* agency). Prerequisite to a Stake President pulling men aside and instructing them on the need to listen to women is the need for agency on his part. Contrasting the levels of agency demonstrated by STENG IMSTs with high structure and high interaction is the lower levels of agency observed among STENG IMSTs with high structure and low interaction.

High Structure and Low Interaction among STENGs

Narratives manifesting structural engagement IMSTs with high structure and low interaction are not focused on the use of structure to influence others; but they are focused on how structure provides satisfaction for individual personal needs. In other words—for STENGs with high structure and low interaction—individual interpretation of structural properties is not a resource to persuade others but it does provide a basis for personal decisions, attitudes, and behaviors.

It is important to underscore plausible relationships between lower levels of agency and interaction, and higher levels of structure. Narratives from individuals who show high levels of structural influence and low levels of interaction in their use of STENG IMSTs also manifest particular satisfaction with their purposeful implementation of structural properties. Therefore, there may be less need for interaction and agency. Interaction and agency have been shown among other IMST types, as well as by STENG IMSTs with high structure and high interaction, to

facilitate meeting perceived needs. Presumably when individuals perceive that certain behaviors satisfy their needs, they will seek to continue those behaviors. Hence, it makes sense that STENG IMSTs with high degrees of structural satisfaction would also have less need for the transformative functions of interaction and agency.

Susan uses her perceptions of the structure as resources for the decision to postpone marriage and serve a full-time church mission. The expectation of her family and others was that she would marry and fulfill the stay at home mom role. She, however, engaged the structure to move beyond compliance with other's perceptions of how to appropriate a limited set of rules. Specifically, she gave more relevancy to rules regarding the viability of choosing other paths, such as church mission service, rather than "waiting around to marry just anyone." Susan's use of structure functioned to provide satisfaction for her own needs at the time. Ultimately, after serving a church mission, she did marry and perform, for a time, the stay at home mom role. But, as she explains, fulfilling this role was secondary to personal satisfaction derived from a particular appropriation of the structure.

Even though they said well the woman's role you know you should really look for a husband. I said well I'm not willing to be desperate. If I haven't found 'em by the age of 21 I'll just go on a mission. And I did and that was perfectly fine.

Debbie's use of structure also contradicts how others interpreted rules for her. As she explains: "I was led to believe that women were quiet and subservient. You do as you're told. You have all the babies you possibly can." Her own study of church rules

led to a different interpretation and appropriation of structure which resulted in the views that what the prophets said was entirely different and that “I’m a partner. I walk with him—*not* behind him!”

Pam perceives that her engagement of structural properties is the basis for what she perceives to be a satisfying and happy lifestyle. Specifically, she describes her performance of the stay at home mom role as better than alternatives (e.g., career plans) which she had anticipated previous to joining the church. She attributes happiness in her current role to following various “church teachings.” The salience she gives to such structural rules is evidenced by her claim that “women have special talents and abilities to take care of their children and that’s more important than being in the workforce.” The specific value she attributes to engaging the structure and enacting the stay at home mom role is further demonstrated as she concludes the narrative: “I am very glad that my life didn’t turn out the way I had planned it because it is much better.”

Structural Elaboration among STENG IMSTs

Most structural elaboration among STENG IMSTs can be categorized as movement toward *increased interaction* and *increased agency*. The nature of interaction and agency observed in these narratives are similar to those of other IMST types and further analysis does not reveal anything new about either interaction nor agency. The difference is that while other IMST types may manifest limited and particular types of interaction, STENG IMSTs manifest using multiple functions of interaction and agency. For instance, individual STENG IMSTs often show both the

type of interaction found in COLL IMSTs as well as the type of interaction found in SIA IMSTs simultaneously. In other words, STENG IMSTs have a broader more complex repertoire for the use of interaction and agency. Another common theme emerging from the STENG IMST narratives with structural elaboration toward increased interaction and increased agency is the perceived need to improve listening.

Jacob's reflections on his perceived growth as a priesthood leader illustrates how structural engagement is accompanied by structural elaboration toward increased interaction and increased agency. Jacob's description of an experience where he felt a need to perform better as a priesthood leader provides background for understanding how interaction and structure work together to provide impetus for structural engagement and structural elaboration.

There was one time a sister and her husband wanted to talk to me. I think there might have been a little bit of abuse going on there. You know how men when they've done something they're not suppose to they kind of sugarcoat it. They were both with me in the room and I think she was wanting it to come out. . . . I just feel like I didn't do it right but I don't know what I should've done. . . . I don't think he was beating her—probably some verbal abuse going on and I think she was wanting me to kinda get onto him. I don't think I played favoritism I just think I didn't zero in on the pain that she was feeling like I should've. Makes you want to pause and listen a little more. I guess I was a better listener after that.

Jacob then explains how his perceptions about performing the leadership role began to change subsequent to this experience. While the specific interaction was an impetus for structural elaboration, additional structural properties were drawn upon also as part of his process of change in attitudes about leadership. He specifically points to an inspiring Stake President, scriptural quotes about the Savior (“They loved him because he first loved them”), scriptures about power (“no power or influence ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood only by love unfeigned”), and M. Russell Ballard’s book 1997 *Counseling with our Councils*. Jacob interprets Ballard’s claim that women and others are not listened to as a relevant rule that he purposefully uses in shaping his future interactions.

That really shaped me big time reading that book. In fact I’ve got it on CD and listen to it over and over again. I thought if I’m ever in a situation where I’m the leader again—that’s the way I want to do it. I’ll make the final decision and I’ll pray about it and go to the Lord. But I want to make sure everybody’s telling me what they think. I don’t want anyone sitting there and being quiet. You know, I want input! And if feel like that if we’ve got a lot of different opinions and stuff I may just table it until the next meeting and we’ll talk about it again until I get more consensus. And I’m going to try to hesitate to say what I think. I’m going to try to hold back. . . . If they know you respect them, understand them and that you care about them. And they see the wisdom in what you’re doing and you don’t just always make people do things your way. You really respect their opinion and if their opinion’s better than yours you go with it you know. And they’re going to

bend over backwards—they'll love you and they'll care about you. To me that's what true love is you know mutual respect and admiration. That's what I know I should be doing!

Jacob further illustrates positive outcomes of the interdependent nature of structural elaboration toward increased interaction and increased agency in his description of the transformative value he finds in interacting with others.

I think every life experience you have causes you to have more empathy. When people come before you for counseling and they're crying you shed a tear yourself because you know how they must feel.

Ultimately, Jacob's broad repertoire of structural engagement, interaction, and agency leads him to focus on improving his listening skills. "I try to make more of a conscientious effort to be a good listener."

Nick's discussions with his wife about employment options and the desire for one parent to be home with their children draws upon various rules and illustrates a desire to listen to her desires while simultaneously engaging the structure to satisfy his own needs. His personal preference—based on his own perception of organizational rules—is for a parent to be home with the children. Nick shows flexibility and agency in the appropriation of the rule and specifically expresses to his wife that it does not matter to him which parent stays home. This flexibility and agency is further accompanied by a desire to listen to and accommodate her desires to remain involved in her profession as well. Yet, she also interprets messages from church leaders to say that she should be home with her children. Some may conceptualize the choice to be

limited to either (a) whether or not she works outside the home, or (b) which parent remains in the home. Despite these tensions, Nick perceives several options for a satisfying engagement of the structure on this subject. He does clarify that because he and his wife have the same educational level and flexibility in their professions they have more choices on the matter than many of his friends. Ultimately, his desire to listen coupled with his repertoire of agency result in the decision for both parents to work outside the home on alternating days. Since they alternate days and not shifts they have the benefits of family time each evening while also satisfying the perceived need for at least one parent to always be home with the children during the day.

The nature of Carl's interactions with others in the context of his position as Bishop also manifests structural engagement, listening, and repertoire of agency. His particular appropriation of the rule that priesthood leaders should listen to women shows a great degree of agency on his part. The formal organizational chart (*qua* rule) indicates that as a Bishop he has two counselors—both male priesthood holders—who assist him with the functions of his position. As a Bishop he is also expected to solicit assistance from the all-male Priesthood Executive Committee (PEC), which meets weekly. Additional assistance is found in the Welfare Committee and Ward Council, both of which meet monthly. Women, particularly Relief Society presidents, typically participate in the Welfare and Ward Council meetings. Carl interprets the rule to listen to women to mean that he should expand opportunities for Relief Society Presidents (women) to have influence in local church decision making. Specifically, Carl invited the Relief Society President to attend the weekly Priesthood

Executive Committee meetings—until he was told by stake leaders to stop the practice. “I told the Relief Society Presidents and I told the priesthood leadership that I regarded the Relief Society President as essentially a counselor to me.” Although he no longer had Relief Society Presidents attending PEC, Carl continued the practice of extending to them the quasi-counselor role. His repertoire of agency and efforts to listen to women also shaped additional interactions with other men. “In meetings I would say things like ‘let’s be careful how we talk about the sisters’ or ‘lets be a little more sensitive.’” Rationale for continued structural elaboration toward increased interaction and increased agency can be found in how Carl summarizes the effectiveness he perceives of this type of structural engagement: “Several people, especially Relief Society Presidents said on a number of occasions that they appreciated working with me. They appreciated that I listened to them and so on.”

Summary of RQ3

Four key dimensions—agency, structure, interaction, structural elaboration—are emergent from the concept map data and central to a communication-based response to the debate over competing influences of structure and agency. Understanding the function of these four dimensions is the subject of the third research question.

RQ3: On the basis of LDS church members’ reports of their perceptions of gender roles, what are the roles and nature of agency, structure, interaction, and structural elaboration in immediacy structures used by members of the LDS church?

The magnitude and direction of each dimension's influence upon each concept map was plotted on 4-D graphs. This geometrical presentation of the four dimensions was helpful in revealing multiple degrees of influence of each dimension upon each IMST type. However, understanding their influences in detail required analysis of how the nature of each dimension varied across the six IMST types. Analyses of the data suggest that the roles and nature of agency, structure, interaction, and structural elaboration are fluid and not necessarily mutually exclusive. That is, their functions are not static and, thus, not easily categorized. Therefore, summarizing RQ3 invites the risk of oversimplifying the complex role and nature of each dimension.

Agency's role varies from being treated as a non-issue, as in the *rigid* IMST type, to functioning as the structure, as in the *structural engagement* IMST type. We see a contrast in the nature of agency particularly between the *response* IMST types. Whereas the *response no agency* IMSTs demonstrate a perception of lost agency coupled with an inability to act, *response agency* IMSTs illustrate that life interruptions facilitate agency, coupled with a perceived ability to act. We also begin to see agency's connection to interaction when we look at the *collectivity grounded* and *symbolic interaction* IMST types. Specifically, *collectivity grounded* IMSTs demonstrate desires to compensate for parental shortcomings and to have what they perceive (attribute) brings happiness to those whom they observe. Agency within *symbolic interaction* IMSTs is discovered through interaction. Agency within *symbolic interaction* IMSTs also functions to facilitate interaction. Ultimately, agency—as the structure for the *structural engagement* IMST type—fulfills a

transformative role in the application of rules and resources (i.e., rules become resources and vice versa).

Differences in structure's role across the six IMST types parallel somewhat the differences in agency's role. To begin with, the nature of structure within the rigid IMST type can be characterized as the passive acceptance and replication of status quo behaviors. Structure emerges in the *response no agency* IMST type as an imposed set of rules used as a resource for judging others. As such, structure functions among *response no agency* IMSTs to facilitate a focus on idealized (i.e., yet unrealistic) views and limits agency. Structure has a completely different nature among the *response agency* IMSTs. Specifically, *response agency* IMSTs demonstrate the use of structure as a resource for positive and altruistic solutions to problems--while facilitating agency. The *collectivity grounded* and *symbolic interaction* IMST types both rely upon involvement in the structure to provide relationships and context for interaction (i.e., general observations for *collectivity grounded* IMSTs; specific interactions for *symbolic interaction* IMSTs). Meanwhile, the purposeful use of structure as a tool or resource is a primary characteristic of the *structural engagement* IMST type.

While interaction is limited—primarily to perceptions of familial rules—among *rigid* IMSTs, it plays a central role in the creation of the other five IMST types. First, interaction for the *response no agency* IMST type is generally negative and demonstrates the use of avoidance as a strategy for conflict management. Interaction among *response no agency* IMSTs is also focused on reaffirming

perceptions of loss of individual agency, and blaming others for such losses. Next, *response agency* IMSTs demonstrate a different type of interaction that is characterized by a focus on assumptions about agency and structural appropriation. Among *response agency* IMSTs, interaction functions specifically as a vehicle for discussing choices. In other words interaction's role for response IMST types can be summarized as limiting agency (i.e., among *response no agency* IMSTs) and facilitating agency (i.e., among *response agency* IMSTs).

Interaction plays a straightforward but powerful role for the *collectivity grounded* and *symbolic interaction* IMST types. Among *collectivity grounded* IMSTs, interaction is limited to general observations of the collectivity. These general observations are powerful in that they function as sources for role-defining rules as well as sources for validation of rule appropriation. Contrasting the general observations found in the *collectivity grounded* IMST type are the specific discussions characteristic of the *symbolic interaction* IMST type. The specific discussions found among *symbolic interaction* IMSTs are with specific individuals about specific rules and roles. These discussions are often focused on clarifying structural properties and agency. Thus, interaction for the *symbolic interaction* IMST type is very focused and functions to facilitate agency.

Interaction for the *structural engagement* IMST type is more complex because the magnitude of its influence varies across the *structural engagement* IMST narratives. Specifically, some structural engagement IMSTs show high structure and high interaction (accompanied by high agency) while others show high structure and

low interaction (accompanied by less agency). For structural engagement IMSTs with high structure and high interaction, interaction is a mechanism (*qua* resource) used to convey view of how structure should be appropriated. For structural engagement IMSTs with high structure and low interaction, individual needs have previously been satisfied, and presumably there is less need for interaction and agency. Thus, while interaction may be a resource for communicating assumptions about structural appropriation, it also has a transformative function, which is not needed by some who use this IMST type.

Across all IMST types, interaction is connected to agency and structure (i.e., in varying degrees and functions). Similarly, the nature of interaction (*qua* specific interactions, general observations, perceptions, and the absence of any interaction) contributes to the degree and nature of structural elaboration across the six IMST types. First, for the *rigid* IMST type, interaction is very limited and structural elaboration is even more minimal; in fact, structural elaboration is antithetical to the *rigid* IMST type. Next, the nature of structural elaboration among *response no agency* IMSTs is characterized by a bi-directional influence of interaction, which hinges on perceptions of agency. Specifically, when individuals using the *response no agency* IMST type perceive that outcomes are based on their spouse's performance, interaction becomes more negative (*qua* structural elaboration). Conversely, interaction becomes more positive (*qua* structural elaboration) when conditions are perceived to be external to the relationship and beyond either party's control.

Interaction plays an important role in facilitating the high levels of structural elaboration toward increased agency found in the *response agency* IMST type. This structural elaboration toward increased agency is an outcome of interaction—which for this IMST type is focused on perceptions of agency and discussing options. Specifically, among the response agency IMSTs, acting upon perceived agency leads to increased perceptions of agency.

For the *collectivity grounded* IMST type, structural elaboration is in the direction of increased interaction. Increased interaction is subsequent to satisfaction with outcomes from initial use of observations as the source for rules. In other words, structural elaboration toward increased interaction for individuals using *collectivity grounded* IMSTs is based upon perceived satisfaction with interaction. The structural elaboration toward increased interaction found among *symbolic interaction* IMSTs is more closely connected to structure and agency. *Symbolic interaction* IMSTs with structural elaboration toward increased interaction and increased agency are characterized by specific discussions which provide validation for individual appropriation of agency and rules. For some *symbolic interaction* IMSTs, structural elaboration is toward increased interaction and increased structure. In these cases, structural elaboration is an outcome of presumed satisfaction with individual efforts to correct how others appropriate rules.

Structural elaboration for the *structural engagement* IMST type is toward increased interaction and increased agency. Many aspects of this IMST type are similar to the other, except *rigid*, IMST types. For example, when structural

elaboration occurs within the *structural engagement* IMST interaction and agency fulfill multiple functions. What makes the structural engagement IMST unique is not necessarily its particular characteristics or its structural elaboration; rather, it is that the nature of this IMST's structural elaboration includes an increased repertoire of agency and structure, which are accompanied by desires to improve listening.

How Structures Constrain and Enable

The fourth research question invites discussion of the central point of debate between Giddens and his critics regarding the relationship between structure and agency. Specifically, this debate pits duality of structure (i.e., structure and action are synonymous and simultaneously reconstitutive) against dualism (i.e., structure and action are separate, temporally ordered, and competing). RQ4 stems from a communication-based effort to explore this conflict, which is concerned with whether or not structures constrain action on the level of individual IMSTs.

RQ4: How do structures constrain and enable the creation and enactment of LDS church members' immediacy structures regarding their perceptions of gender role(s)?

Answers to the previous research questions—regarding types of IMSTs; rules and resources used to create IMSTs; and the nature of agency, structure, interaction, and structural elaboration among IMSTs—provide the basis for responding to RQ4. The focus in these analyses is on the micro level effects of structure and operations of individual agency and individual actions within the context of individual (*qua* immediacy) structures. Thus, this discussion is focused on how multiple levels of

structure (e.g., societal, organizational, familial) pertain to individual action.

Particular emphasis is given to the effects of the church (*qua* organizational) structure upon interpretations and performance of gender role(s).

Initial review of the data suggests that structure definitely does facilitate action and that it definitely does constrain action. To understand how enabling or how oppressive LDS church structures may be, we must look at the ubiquitous nature of each function. Specifically, this discussion will focus on degrees of constraint across the six IMST types, factors that constrain and enable action, and the role of communication in determining constraint or action.

Degrees of Constraint across the Six IMST Types

One would be mistaken to conclude that action is constrained entirely within any one of the IMST types. We can, however, conceptualize the magnitude of action as varying across the six IMST types. Likewise, there is no IMST type wherein some degree of structural constraint does not exist. Thus, it would be helpful to organize the IMST types according to the degrees of constraint found in each. Using this framework to position the IMST types on a continuum of most to least constraint manifested the IMST types would follow this order: *rigid*, *response no agency*, *response agency*, *symbolic interaction* and *collectivity grounded*, and *structural engagement*.

The greatest degree of structural constraint is manifested in the *rigid* IMST type because *rigid* IMSTs show virtually no consideration for alternative actions, agency, or interaction. This passive acceptance of status quo interpretations and

appropriations of structural properties—characteristic of the *rigid* IMST type—functions to blindly constrain action. It is easy to see how such hegemonic processes occur within the range of *rigid* IMSTs. Specifically, the data speak to a process of individuals passively accepting their own rigid submissiveness as normal, while treating agency and deliberation as moot concepts. The general outcome of this process is that individuals have a conviction that certain attitudes and behaviors are to be commonly expected (i.e., within the church and family systems). The powerful and perpetual binding nature of this process, and its constraint of action, is further manifested by the absence of structural elaboration found among *rigid* IMSTs.

Both response IMST types experience limitations on their ability to act. The very nature of these IMST types mandates consideration for the fact that impositions, or life interruptions, to which they respond do not fall within the realm of circumstances individuals would have chosen for themselves. Some of these cases are impositions of either the societal structure (e.g., societal norms, employment patterns), church structure (e.g., the Bishop who would not listen), workplace structure (e.g., debilitating workplace injuries), or familial structure (e.g., the husband who would not lead family home evening). Other cases, such as severe health issues, were not structural impositions but functioned nonetheless to constrain action and demand responses. For these reasons both response IMST types are categorized as having considerable degrees of constraint, *response no agency* much more so than *response agency*.

Therefore, the *response no agency* IMST type demonstrates the second highest degree of structural constraint. When individuals using *response no agency* IMSTs focus on their perceived loss of agency, they demonstrate knowledge of the possibility for conditions and actions to be different. In this way the *response no agency* IMST type is not as constraining as the *rigid* IMST type. However, the heightened sensitivity to lost agency functions to limit perceived ability to act. The use of rules as resources for legitimizing perceived inability to act exacerbates the problem. While structure may or may not be imposed upon individuals using the *response no agency* IMST, its appropriation effectively functions to paralyze individuals' ability and willingness to act.

Contrasting the paralyzing nature of *response no agency* IMSTs is the *response agency* IMSTs' appropriation of structural properties as resources for determining action (i.e., enabling; not constraining). As an IMST type focused on responding to unexpected conditions there is a some inevitable structural constraint among the *response agency* IMSTs. Nonetheless, the magnitude of structural constraint begins to diminish with the *response agency* IMST type.

Structural constraint among *response agency* IMSTs is manifested by the fact that consideration of action is limited to options provided by the structure. Meanwhile, the limited constraint of action is manifested by the relationship between agency, interaction, and structure's ability to enable action. Specifically, among *response agency* IMSTs, agency and structural appropriation facilitate each other while interaction (i.e., discussion and perceptions) shapes assumptions about viable

structural appropriation and individual ability to act. Ultimately this relationship generates the use of structure as a resource for altruistic solutions to pending problems. Thus, although action is constrained by structure, it is also enabled by structure. This dichotomous function of structure and its relevant balance with agency is further evidenced by the fact that action—which remains within the parameters of structure—is accompanied by high degrees of structural elaboration toward increased agency among *response agency* IMSTs.

The relationships between structure, agency, and interaction further limit the degree of structural constraint upon action in the *symbolic interaction* and *collectivity grounded* IMST types. While the basic type of interaction differs for these IMSTs (i.e., symbolic interaction = specific discussion; collectivity grounded = general observations), the degree to which action is constrained remains equal for both *symbolic interaction* and *collectivity grounded* IMSTs. In both cases structure enables and constrains action by providing context for interaction. Interactions in these IMST types function to simultaneously create and recreate structural constraint as well as action. For instance, interaction among *symbolic interaction* IMSTs occurs in the context provided by structure (*qua* enables), is focused on clarifying structural properties and the extent of agency (*qua* constrains), and facilitates appropriation of structure and agency (*qua* enables). Furthermore, agency facilitates continued interaction (*qua* enables). There is a substantial amount of action demonstrated through interaction and agency among both *symbolic interaction* and *collectivity grounded* IMSTs. This suggests a limited degree of structural constraint. However, all

action vis-a-vis interaction and agency is tightly connected to and reliant upon structural influences. The interdependence of interaction, action, and constraint of action among *symbolic interaction* and *collectivity grounded* IMSTs is further manifested by the nature of structural elaboration. For both *symbolic interaction* and *collectivity grounded*, structural elaboration is toward increased interaction (*qua* enables) but remains anchored (*qua* constrains) in structural properties (e.g., validation for rule appropriation).

The least degree of constraint is found in the *structural engagement* IMST type. The very nature of this IMST type, which is that individuals purposefully use properties of the structure as a tools or resources, suggests more agency and less constraint. Interaction and agency's connections to constraint and action further differentiate the *structural engagement* IMST type. Unlike the other IMST types, interaction among structural engagement IMSTs is not limited to discovery of structural appropriation and parameters of agency (*qua* constraint) but it is subsequent to presumptions of accuracy given to one's own interpretation and appropriation of structure (*qua* enables). Agency, on the other hand, takes on a much more prominent role as it becomes the structure (*qua* action) and fulfills a transformative function (*qua* enables) whereby rules become resources and vice versa. There is less simultaneity in the temporal ordering of agency, structure, and interaction among *structural engagement* IMSTs than there is in the other IMST types. Specifically, agency emerges among *structural engagement* IMSTs as antecedent to interaction and structure's influence. In summary, (although we cannot entirely escape the

anchoring of action to structural context) it is agency—not structure—that constrains and enables action among *structural engagement* IMSTs.

Factors that Constrain and Enable Action

What constrains or limits action is not so much the presence of a set of rules from a structure. Constraint of action is more the result of how one perceives and regards agency. Particularly indicative of constraint is the treatment of agency as a moot issue (e.g., *rigid* IMSTs) and the perception and amplification of lost agency (e.g., *response no agency* IMSTs) coupled with a decrease in the amount and quality of interaction with others. In other words it is not the structure that constrains action, rather it is how the individual appropriates structure and perceptions of degrees of agency, both of which appear to be connected to the amount and nature of interaction. Other factors that contribute to constraint include a focus on status quo and little or no structural elaboration of the IMST. In summary, structures constrain and impose when individuals: (a) perceive less agency, (b) do not appear concerned with agency, (c) use structure to judge others or self, (d) are less involved in interactions with other agents, and (e) demonstrate limited or negative interactions.

Meanwhile, structures enable action when individuals perceive that they have greater degrees of agency (i.e., as found among the response agency, symbolic interaction, collectivity grounded, and structural engagement IMSTs). Action is also enabled by structure when individuals use structure as a resource for solutions. The more purposeful individuals are in using structure as a resource, the more their perception of individual agency is required. In other words, structure becomes less

constraining and more enabling when individuals perceive higher degrees of agency. To say structure enables or constrains oversimplifies the role of agency. Likewise, to say that individuals either have or do not have sufficient agency to act or not act also oversimplifies the nature of the relationship between structural constraint and action. The underlying themes—common across cases where action is constrained or enabled—are the perception of agency and the perceived accuracy of structural appropriation, which are shaped largely by the nature of interaction (*qua* communication). Thus, to understand the factors that constrain and enable action we should review communication's role in this process.

The Role of Communication in Determining Constraint or Action

The lack of communication, or communication that is negative and focused on using structural properties as content for judging others or justifying inaction, accompanies the appearance of structure as an imposition (i.e., functions to constrain action). Action is enabled when interaction is focused on discovering resources and alternatives for structural appropriation, and clarifying rules and degrees of agency. This also points to the role of perceptions in the creation and enactment of IMSTs. Individuals must perceive agency and structural relevancy before they will engage the structure. The ways in which a rule is appropriated hinge on the perceived relevancy of that rule as well as the perceived accuracy of its interpretation. Agency and structure are not really the issue; *perception of agency* is. Specifically, individuals must perceive that they have agency and that agency is important. Perceiving agency in this way is an outcome of positive and fluid interaction. Interaction can be

transformative and therapeutic, as evidenced by Malinda's discussion about the role of interaction in helping her heal from perceived abuses of power:

Malinda: It lies with the women calling a spade a spade too and that this is unacceptable junk. It is injuring to the saints as a whole if you accept this stuff. You just kinda have to you just have to have some faith and do your best and forget about it. But you do communicate! And that's what this whole thing's about. You do have to communicate and when you see abuse anywhere, you just talk about it.

Ray: How might your experience have been different if you didn't talk about it?

Malinda: Well obviously that's not my nature so it's really hard for me to conjecture. But on the other hand, I probably would've gone to church just like on Christmas. Probably would've had my name removed from the records of the church. Probably would've thrown the bath water out with the baby. Umm I probably would've not worked through some of the emotions like I have. I would have stayed angry.

Ray: So you think talking about was helpful for you?

Malinda: Huge!

Interaction (communication) is a vehicle toward increased perception of agency. Increased interaction focused on positive consideration of fluid rule appropriation and discovery of agency leads to increased perceptions of agency, which in turn leads to less constraint of action. Communication with other agents is,

thus, central to the enabling aspect of structural properties. When there is less communication, or communication is negative, among individual agents, the perceived amount of agency decreases and structural properties become more oppressive and therefore constrain action.

Summary of RQ4

Preliminary observations suggest there are varying degrees of structural constraint and agency found within each of the six IMST types. The six IMST types were organized according to their placement on a continuum of most to least structural constraint (i.e., rigid, response no agency, response agency, symbolic interaction and collectivity grounded, structural engagement). This review of how each IMST type may manifest more or less constraint of action provides a communication-based response to the debate over duality of structure and dualism of structure and agency as competing explanations for the structure—agency dilemma. Some IMST types (rigid and response no agency) demonstrate a relationship between structure and action which more closely fits with the dualism of structure explanation (i.e., action is bounded and constrained by structure). Meanwhile duality of structure (i.e., agency and structure simultaneously reconstitute each other) is a better explanation for other IMST types (symbolic interaction and collectivity grounded). The relationship between agency and structure manifested in the structural engagement IMST type calls for a third explanation, which may be the flip side of dualism, wherein agency is privileged over structure. Across all IMST types key points in determining whether structure constrains or enables action are: (a)

perceptions and appropriations of structure, (b) perceptions of agency, and (c) nature of interaction. Furthermore, communication coupled with the perception of one's agency can be transformative—thereby functioning to enable action. Hence, structures do not constrain and agency does not enable action. It is how individuals perceive and appropriate structure and agency which enables or constrains action. These perceptions are often determined by the amount and nature of communication within the system.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

This study began as an effort to explore structuration theory and its relevancy for the communication discipline. Reviewing structuration literature revealed that (a) communication literature claiming to use structuration often oversimplifies the theory's complexities, (b) there are viable criticisms of the theory, which have largely been overlooked in the communication literature, and (c) communication should be the ontology by which we examine structuration processes. In response to these dilemmas I propose a Model of Transactional Immediacy Structures. This model suggests an approach to the fundamental question of structure vs. agency, which is both communication-based and an integration of competing explanations of the relationship between agency and structure. Namely, Giddens' conceptualization of structuration and the duality of structure and Archer's morphogenetic approach and dualism are conceptualized herein as mutually indispensable anchors of a productive tension. As such, the processes and relationships between structure and agency are considered more complex than what either duality of structure or dualism accounts for. In other words, the Model of Transactional Immediacy Structures proposes that the relationship between structure and agency can best be understood by accepting *duality*, *dualism*, and an integration of the two.

The response, therefore, to the debate may best be a "both and" rather than an "either or" proposition. Specifically, structure is conceptualized as having its origins in agency and interaction but appearing to individuals as if it had already existed as an entity of its own. Meanwhile, agency is conceptualized as both antecedent to and

subsequent to structure. Individuals act in the context of structure, and those actions are bound by structure. Subsequently, the activity of individuals contributes to morphogenetic structural elaboration (i.e., not the *change* proposed by structuration theory). Thus, the Model of Transactional Immediacy Structures accounts for simultaneity of agency and structure on the level of individual's experiences of the structure.

The central concern of this study is to provide a communication-based view of the individual's experiences with agency and structure on the level of immediacy structures. Without disregarding macro structural constraints or limitations of agency on future structural properties, as suggested by morphogenesis and dualism, this study explores the validity of duality of structure at the level of individual experiences. That is, the problems with duality of structure can be addressed by dualism at a larger structural level. But, dualism does not necessarily reflect how the *individual* experiences the structure. This proposition is substantiated in part by the results of this study.

This study resulted in a number of findings that further advance the development of theoretical propositions and empirical analyses of communication, structuration, and their role(s) in organizations. First, methodologies (i.e., concept mapping, 4-D graphing) were developed to address the complexities of a communication-based response to structuration theory. Second, six types of immediacy structures (IMST) emerged from the data. Also emergent from the data were four key dimensions that had particular relevance to the theoretical arguments

and the six emergent IMST types. Third, the data reveal conditions that limit structural elaboration toward decreased reliance on structure. Fourth, the data suggest a relationship between rigid role delineation and limited productivity. Fifth, individual agency was shown to play an important role in determining the degree to which a structure may function to enable or constrain action. Finally, the data in this study point to communication as a primary factor in shaping the enabling or constraining functions of individual agency and structural properties.

The methodologies used in this study provide a framework for future communication research related to structuration. One of the limitations of structuration theory is the difficulty of empirically analyzing its propositions. This study introduces data collection and analysis methods that can be used to examine the various tenets of structuration theory. The critical incident technique invites participants to disclose details of their experiences as agents in a given structure. Concept mapping provides a tool whereby researchers can extrapolate and highlight relevant information from narratives while minimizing the risk of separating themes from the context of the individual's experiences. While the idea of multiple dimensions emerging from theoretical development and grounded data is not new, this study proposes a new method for capturing and analyzing the interplay between multiple dimensions on a two dimensional plane. The graphing of four dimensions in this study facilitates a richer analysis of the data, thereby corroborating concept map findings and increasing the study's power to capture and interpret the complex and

multifaceted nature of participants' experiences relevant to structuration theory in the organizational communication context.

Emergent from the data are six IMST types (i.e., rigid, response no agency, response agency, collectivity grounded, symbolic interaction, structural engagement) and four dimensions (i.e., agency, structure, interaction, structural elaboration), that together provide a framework for understanding the degree to which structure or agency prevails in the explanation of individual attitudes and behaviors in a variety of contexts. These findings are consistent with structuration as well as a communication-based response to criticisms of structuration theory.

No common conditions emerged among 4-D graphs with structural elaboration toward increased structure. Among those with structural elaboration toward decreased structure, common conditions were (a) lower and decreasing levels of interaction, and (b) more frequent use of the response no agency IMST type. Additionally, structural elaboration toward decreased agency did not appear to prevent structural elaboration toward decreased structure, nor does it necessarily cause structural elaboration toward increased structure. This is partial basis for the discussion about conditions to prevent movement away from structure.

Certain conditions—increased interaction, sustained (i.e., maintained over time and across multiple concept maps) moderate to moderately high perceptions of agency, and little or no use of rigid or response no agency IMSTS types—emerged as common among those 4-D graphs illustrating no structural elaboration toward decreased structure. Further review of narratives from individuals whose 4-D graphs

showed no movement away from structure revealed an additional common condition—increased knowledge of rules and access to resources. These four conditions do not necessarily cause or ensure movement toward structure but they do appear to prevent movement away from structure (i.e., similar to Herzberg's motivation hygiene).

Rigid role delineation found among rigid and response no agency IMSTs limits productivity. A number of associated characteristics found among these IMST types corroborate the conclusion that rigid role delineation is presumably undesirable for both individuals and organizations. Specifically, individuals who use the rigid role delineation rule also demonstrate an inability or unwillingness to respond effectively to change, a resistance to change, an unwillingness and perceived inability to act on their own initiative, a pattern of placing blame for failure on others, an inability or unwillingness to look to structural properties for solutions to problems, and a general unwillingness to assess either the accuracy of how they appropriate structural properties or the effectiveness of their performance. Any one of these characteristics could have the unintended consequences of personal dissatisfaction or harm to the system (*qua* organization).

Related to the dualism-duality tension are suggestions in the literature that these conceptualizations are laden with biases for structure over agency (i.e., dualism) or agency over structure (i.e., duality). This model seeks to mitigate these biases and account for the plausible viability of each approach. The data in this study tells us that—depending on the immediacy structure (IMST) type adopted and the nature of

communication experienced—either side of the debate, or an integration of the theoretical premises, can be a more accurate explanation of the processes whereby individual behaviors are shaped and systems emerge. The degree to which one side or another of the tensions identified (e.g., duality of structure vs. dualism, interactional vs. transactional processes) is a more accurate and appropriate explanation depends upon the IMST type employed by the individual (i.e., discursive penetration). In the case of *structural engagement* IMSTs, agency does overshadow structure.

Meanwhile, structure overshadows agency in the *rigid* and *response no agency* IMST types. Furthermore, the other IMST types (i.e., response agency, symbolic interaction, collectivity grounded) manifest conditions where agency and structure—assisted by communication—are mutually constitutive and neither is necessarily more prominent than the other.

The constraining and enabling functions of the IMST types and the four dimensions (i.e., agency, structure, interaction, structural elaboration) can benefit both individuals and organizations (*qua* systems). Findings from this study indicate that increased individual action—accompanied by moderate and moderately high increases in agency, structure, interaction, and structural elaboration—demonstrates a desire and ability to draw upon more rules and resources from the organization, a willingness to evaluate one's performance and one's appropriation of rules, a willingness to clarify interpretations of rules, a desire to use organizational rules and resources for resolving problems, and a desire to take initiative. A caveat, however, is that the mutually beneficial outcomes of increases in the four dimensions is limited to

moderate or moderately high degrees. Analysis of the 4-D graphs reveals that those concept maps with the highest degrees of agency are also lowest on structure, suggesting that too much agency may result in less perceived relevancy or need for structure. While concept maps indicating response agency, collectivity grounded, and symbolic interaction IMST may demonstrate the positive outcomes associated with increases in the four dimensions, structural engagement IMSTs where agency remains moderately high may be the most beneficial for organizations and individuals. These IMSTs draw upon more rules and resources from the organizational structure to anchor the appropriation of their agency. In other words, the greatest degree of individual action is found among structural engagement IMSTs but that action remains beneficial to the organization because it is grounded in desires to improve organizational effectiveness.

One of the major points of the theoretical approach in this study is that the role of communication should be considered more thoroughly in structurationist studies. Communication emerges in the review of the six IMST types and the four dimensions as a key factor in determining how constraining or enabling a structure may be. As demonstrated by the structural engagement IMSTs, interaction is not necessary for high agency or structural appropriation. But, as manifested by the response no agency, collectivity grounded, and symbolic interaction IMST types, interaction does play a critical role in increasing one's understanding of options for structural appropriation and levels of individual agency. Communication also appears to play an important role among 4-D graphs where structural elaboration is not in the

direction of decreased structure. Thus, communication functions as a vehicle for traversing territory (i.e., structural elaboration) from structural impositions and constraints (i.e., as in rigid and response no agency IMSTs) to higher degrees of both agency and structure. In other words, it is through communication that structuration (*qua* the simultaneous creation and recreation of systems and structures) occurs, thereby limiting constraint of action.

The findings in this study, relative to the role of communication in the development and enactment of IMSTs, indicate that certain communication behaviors are associated with greater perceived ability to act. Specifically, individuals whose narratives manifest increased perceptions of agency also demonstrate a variety communication behaviors. Therefore, we can presume that these communication practices can facilitate greater freedom from structural constraints. For example, avoidance and blaming strategies were not present in the narratives of individuals using the *response agency* IMSTs. When the use of *collectivity grounded* and *symbolic interaction* IMST types involves higher degrees of agency, individuals also demonstrate the practice of seeking to understand how multiple people interpret and apply rules and resources, rather than relying on only a few observations (i.e., this contrasts the overreliance on familial structures found in *rigid* IMSTs). Another communication practice manifest by individuals who use *collectivity grounded* and *symbolic interaction* IMST types is an effort to inquire about additional resources. Those who use the *structural engagement* IMST type benefit from an increased repertoire of communication practices that includes: (a) checking their interpretations

and applications of rules, (b) clarifying perceptions of rules and degrees of agency within the organization, (c) seeking to improve listening, and (d) developing altruistic messages, interpretations, and applications of rules. Since both *collectivity grounded* and *symbolic interaction* IMST types are associated with increased degrees of perceived agency, we can conclude that integrating the two processes and engaging in a practice of using both general observations and specification conversations as resources can also facilitate greater freedom from structural constraint. Finally, much structural constraint is found among individuals who demonstrate lower, and decreasing, amounts of interaction, while employing the rigid and response no agency IMSTs. Hence, a critical recommendation for individuals who perceive that their interactions are dissatisfying is that they should look for alternative ways to interact and alternative interaction partners instead of shutting down communication.

Limitations

There are, unfortunately, a few limitations to this study. First, the sample is limited to active LDS church members. Second, the interviews provide only a limited view of participants' knowledge of rules. Third, field notes were insufficient.

This sample is limited to church members who actively attend church meetings and participate in church service positions. Presumably individuals who are thus voluntarily involved in the organization are also generally satisfied. While it is beneficial to have a baseline view of what some may perceive as the normal members' experiences, there are many other voices which should be heard. Individuals from several diverse demographics would likely provide much different

messages in their narratives. These include individuals who have been excommunicated from the church (many of whom still identify themselves as members of the church), individuals who remain members but do not actively participate, members with extreme personal or political agendas, members who are high ranking church officials, or members who belong to fringe groups (e.g., GLBT).

Another limitation in this study is that the data do not explicitly reveal whether or not a participant had knowledge of a rule. The data only reflect if they reported a claim that they knew some rules, or if they reported the influence of rules. I was careful in the interviews to not ask participants if they knew rules which I thought I knew or that I thought were relevant. This would impose my own interpretations and experiences with structural properties on their narratives. When there is no mention of rules it may be because (a) they lacked knowledge of rules, (b) they perceived a given rule(s) as less relevant, or (c) the knowledge of a given rule was not as influential as other factors cited in their narratives. This point about knowledge of rules is applicable also to participants' access to resources.

My field notes did not capture detailed information about physical surroundings and nonverbal behaviors such as emotional displays (except in cases where they were heightened and more visible). In listening to the tapes I could detect laughter, crying, anger, and excitement, but without field notes of other nonverbal behaviors, these observations of emotional displays are limited and tenuous. Also, I could have written more field notes to capture the impromptu conversations that occurred after the interview was concluded and recording equipment packed up. I did

not initially record such conversations because (a) at first they did not seem to be significant, and (b) there was a perception that the interview was over and that the subsequent conversation was not “data.” During the analyses of the data, I remembered certain conversations that may have been useful. For example, one participant showed me a coin that he carried in his wallet everywhere. It was given to him by his daughter several years ago and it had special significance for him regarding their relationship and his role as a father. But, those memories were not promptly recorded, and I realized the lapse in time could result in inaccuracies. Therefore, these memories were not used—but may have added meaning and richness to the interpretation—in the analysis. More attention to peripheral details could be given in future interviews (e.g., emotional displays, post interview conversation, descriptions of the location and setting of the interview). This would allow me to provide richer description. It does not appear that, for the current research questions, this information would have significantly changed any findings. However, it would help in making further conclusions about issues, such as the happiness of individuals and their satisfaction with outcomes, for which future research is suggested.

Future Research

While this study introduces the Model of Transactional Immediacy Structures and answers relevant research questions, it also provides opportunities for future research. Specifically, suggestions for future use of methodologies, contextual applications, and research propositions, emerge from this communication-based theoretical and empirical analysis of structuration related issues.

The value of this theoretical framework, method, and analytical tools (i.e., concept mapping, 4-D graphing) is that they could be used to further examine a variety of organizational communication issues such as socialization of organizational newcomers, adoption of organizational change, compliance gaining, and organizational exit. This approach to the study of structuration and communication could also provide useful explanations of the influence of organizations on family relationships. Specifically, future research could extrapolate the findings and methodologies of this study to more directly examine how individuals negotiate potential conflicts (e.g., role conflict, time and space issues) inherent in the work-family tension. This model can also provide insights into other structural contexts beyond organizational communication (e.g., interpersonal, group, family).

Another topic not addressed directly in this study is individual accountability. The data does, however, suggest the salience of accountability as an additional factor, which warrants more attention. The focus on agency, structure, interaction, and structural elaboration may have resulted in minimizing the effect of participants' willingness to hold themselves accountable and accept responsibility for outcomes. Yet in the narratives manifesting rigid IMSTs, individuals seem to abdicate personal responsibility. Perhaps there are connections between where individuals place blame and responsibility for their circumstances, the degree of structural constraint perceived, the amount of agency used, and the particular IMST type adopted. Hence, future research should focus on the role of individual accountability.

This study also reveals that the processes are different and that the level of structural constraint or agency varies across IMST types. That is, constraint of action is not equated to the performance of any given role. Rather constraint is a function of the IMST used to arrive at the position of performing the given role. Although these issues are addressed in this study, the degrees of satisfaction and happiness—which may or may not be associated with the role or the related IMST type—are not considered. More could be done to examine whether the differences between *rigid* and *structural engagement* IMSTs yield different emotions for the same role-performance outcomes. Therefore, future research could also focus on relationships between happiness, satisfaction, and the various IMST types.

On the basis of the results from this study, which were summarized earlier in this chapter, there are a number of propositions for future research. First, the analysis of 4-D graphs invites consideration of what conditions facilitate structural elaboration toward increased structure. This discussion would be particularly useful for managers concerned with compliance gaining among organizational members. The data in this study do not provide a basis for drawing conclusions about what conditions might lead to structural elaboration the direction of increased structure. But, the data do speak to conditions where structural elaboration is not likely to be in the direction of decreased structure. Therefore, the first proposition for future research addresses prevention of movement away from structure.

Proposition 1: Increased interaction, sustained moderate to moderately high perceptions of agency, little or no use of rigid or response no agency IMST

types, and increased knowledge of rules and access to resources will prevent structural elaboration toward decreased structure.

Another important finding for organizational communication scholars is that the rigid role delineation found among *rigid* and *response no agency* IMSTs limits productivity. Therefore, the second proposition for future research suggests the need to further review the effects of rigid role delineation upon individuals and organizations.

Proposition 2: Rigid role delineation limits individual action and organizational effectiveness.

Related to organizational effectiveness is the finding that the constraining and enabling functions of the four dimensions (agency, structure, interaction, structural elaboration) can be beneficial for both individuals and organizations. Specifically, mutually beneficial outcomes for organizations and individuals appear to be related moderate or moderately high degrees of the four dimensions (i.e., typical of the structural engagement IMST type). Hence, the third and fourth propositions focus on how increases in the four dimensions and the functions of structural engagement IMSTs may benefit individuals as well as organizations.

Proposition 3: Moderate and moderately high degrees of the four dimensions—agency, structure, interaction, and structural elaboration—are beneficial for both organizations and individuals.

Proposition 4: The structural engagement IMST type is beneficial for both organizations and individuals.

Central to the focus of the Model of Transactional Immediacy Structures and the findings in this study is the role of communication. Specifically, on the basis of results in this study, the final proposition for future research suggests that communication plays a transformative role in limiting structure's constraint of action.

Proposition 5: Communication facilitates agency and enables transitions away from structural constraint.

Recommendations and Applications

Beyond the theoretical, methodological, and research program recommendations, the results of this study suggest a number of practical applications for organizations and individuals. First, on the organizational level, managers and communication practitioners could benefit from the results by looking for ways to foster more interaction among organizational members. By encouraging the emergence of informal communication networks, organizational leaders can provide opportunities for organizational members, at all levels, to interact in ways that increase individual understanding of multiple rules and viable appropriations of those rules. Furthermore, organizational leaders who foster relationships wherein disclosure of their efforts (i.e., successes and failures) to interpret and appropriate structural properties (i.e., organizational rules and resources) will also help members perceive greater degrees of agency. While formal training procedures and specific allocation of resources may be useful, the benefits of individual organizational members engaging in direct, personal, and informal communication can facilitate more effective individual action. In other words, organizational leaders should seek to create a

communication climate (*qua* structure and system) focused on increasing individuals' repertoire of structural knowledge (*qua* rules and resources) as well as the degrees to which they perceive themselves as having agency. A climate of this nature can help an individual—who may be resistant to change or who may be unwilling to contribute his or her own innovations to increase organizational effectiveness—transform his or her attitudes and behaviors, resulting in greater ability and desire to perform according to organizational needs.

Applications on the individual level include recommendations that individuals (a) seek to evaluate perceptions about personal choices and assumptions concerning one's agency, (b) evaluate the accuracy of one's own interpretations and appropriations of rules, (c) increase personal knowledge of rules and resources, (d) participate actively in networking opportunities (i.e., formal and informal), and (e) proactively engage communication that will help others, as well as self, to discover effective and balanced use of structure and agency.

Conclusion

One of the great questions of social science inquiry concerns the relationship between agency and structure as explanations for human behavior. Giddens' (1979, 1984) structuration theory is one effort to resolve this issue. With attractive concepts such as duality of structure and agency, structuration theory has found a home in literature across many disciplines. Meanwhile, pervasive and continuous debate over structure and agency obfuscates the importance of communication in the processes whereby individuals shape, or are shaped, by their specific experiences with systems.

In the communication studies literature, structuration theory is often introduced as a theoretical solution for limitations and shortcomings acknowledged in various topical and contextual aspects of communication research. However, when researchers engage in this practice they often elevate structuration theory to a position of prominence over communication while not considering the limitations and implications of structuration theory's premises and propositions.

The theoretical orientation of this study is an effort to mitigate the implications inherent in structurationist contributions to the debate over structure and agency by proposing a communication-based response to both the debate and criticisms of structuration. Specifically, a Model of Transactional Immediacy Structures is proposed as an integrated approach (i.e., integration of competing explanations of the agency-structure dilemma) grounded in a perspective that privileges communication as an ontology for understanding structuration-related processes. The LDS church provides an appropriate context for analyzing the Model of Transactional Immediacy Structures relative to gender roles (i.e., gender in this organizational context is conceptualized as synonymous with sex; males enact masculine roles; females enact feminine roles). Consideration of gender roles in the context of the LDS church invites one to question whether or not this church structure constrains action or if it is oppressive of individuals. Analyses of the data provide clear answers to this question.

Based on the data in this study, we cannot say that characteristics of the LDS church structure are not oppressive. Nor can we necessarily say that these structural

properties are oppressive. What we can observe from these data is that some individuals may experience the church structure as oppressive while others experience it as emancipating. The degree to which the structure is oppressive, emancipative, or somewhere between the two extremes, appears to be an outcome of individual perceptions and appropriations of structural relevancy, interpretation, and agency. The data in this study suggest that communication is associated with, and presumably plays a transformative role toward, increased awareness of alternative viable appropriations of structure and confidence in one's ability to act (*qua* agency).

Moreover, the specific IMST types used by participants pertain to meanings created and experienced by individuals (as per the transactional perspective). This is not limited to how they influence, or are influenced by, others (as per Conrad's concerns; Conrad, 1993). However, these data also allow us to consider a multifaceted view from the perspective of the individual. This view extends beyond the constraints of an interactional view to include the transactional view—and vice versa. Specifically, for some individuals the realities they experience (meaning) are decided by what they perceive (*response no agency* IMSTs) or fail to perceive (*rigid* IMSTs) that others have done to them. Equally true is that for some the reality is defined by how they use structure and symbols to influence others' behaviors. Hence, it is only through synthesizing the interactional and transactional approaches that we can fully explain the range of individual's experiences.

Thus, by positioning communication as the ontological basis for examining structuration processes, we can see that—although individual action may always be

somewhat limited by structure—communication plays a critical role in explaining how individuals interface (i.e., how they experience and interpret structural properties) and act (i.e., how they appropriate agency and structure) in systems.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Guide

Critical Incident: Tell me about a time when you came to understand what was appropriate and acceptable behavior for a (man or woman) in the church.

Semi-Guided Follow up Questions:

1. Can you tell me about a time when something you did seemed inappropriate for a (woman or man) in the church?
 - a. How did you come to determine that this was inappropriate?
2. What have you done based on your understanding of what is appropriate for a (woman or man) in the church?
 - a. Did you feel that you had a choice?
3. In what ways have your friends or relatives responded to your choices (or actions) as a (woman or man) in the church?
4. In what ways have other members responded to your choices (or actions) as a (woman or man) in the church?
5. How do you explain your choices (or actions) to others as a (woman or man) in the church?
6. How have these experiences influenced how you teach your children (or others) what men and women in the church should be like?
7. How would you explain to an adult newcomer (convert or investigator) what men and women in the church should be like? (and why they should be this way?)

8. What role does the church played in your opinions about what (men or women) should or shouldn't do?
9. Looking back on your experiences as a (man or woman) in the church how might you have done things differently?

APPENDIX B

The Family: A Proclamation to the World

We, the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, solemnly proclaim that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children.

All human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny. Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose.

In the premortal realm, spirit sons and daughters knew and worshipped God as their Eternal Father and accepted His plan by which His children could obtain a physical body and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize their divine destiny as heirs of eternal life. The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally.

The first commandment that God gave to Adam and Eve pertained to their potential for parenthood as husband and wife. We declare that God's commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force. We further declare that

God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife.

We declare the means by which mortal life is created to be divinely appointed. We affirm the sanctity of life and of its importance in God's eternal plan.

Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children. "Children are an heritage of the Lord" ([Psalm 127:3](#)). Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, and to teach them to love and serve one another, observe the commandments of God, and be law-abiding citizens wherever they live. Husbands and wives—mothers and fathers—will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations.

The family is ordained of God. Marriage between man and woman is essential to His eternal plan. Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity.

Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities. By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers

and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners. Disability, death, or other circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation. Extended families should lend support when needed.

We warn that individuals who violate covenants of chastity, who abuse spouse or offspring, or who fail to fulfill family responsibilities will one day stand accountable before God. Further, we warn that the disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets.

We call upon responsible citizens and officers of government everywhere to promote those measures designed to maintain and strengthen the family as the fundamental unit of society.

This proclamation was read by President Gordon B. Hinckley as part of his message at the General Relief Society Meeting held September 23, 1995, in Salt Lake City, Utah.

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